

capacity to protect the well-being of the people of Canada. Personally, I am happy and feel privileged to have been born in this country, and on no account would I want to live elsewhere. Moreover, I hope that to the last gasp I may proudly say that I am a Quebecker but first and foremost a Canadian just as any Ontarian or Albertan.

Unfortunately, a shadow has been cast over that ideal which, I say without hesitation, is undoubtedly shared by most Canadians. This shadow, Mr. Speaker, is the possibility of our country breaking apart. As you all know, the separatist government of Mr. Lévesque feels that Quebec and its people could develop more fully outside of the present federal system. Sovereignty-association, according to them, is the solution to all the evils suffered by Quebec.

In order to better understand the unavowed objective of the separatist Parti Québécois, which is independence, one must wonder if the use of this fraudulent expression of sovereignty-association does not in itself reflect the irreverence of the separatist government in Quebec and also its desire to fool the people. Indeed, the Larousse dictionary appropriately defines the term "sovereignty" as follows: quality of the political power of a state or government body which is not subject to the control of any other state or body. In short, Mr. Speaker, sovereignty is a milder term which soothes and dulls the mind but which actually means nothing short of separation and independence.

Larousse also defines association as follows: a group of persons with a common interest. Of course, those persons must be able to identify their common interest. Now, an analysis of Mr. Lévesque's words seems to indicate that he, unlike any other premier, has identified the common interest which would allow such an association. I actually said, unlike any other premier, because one after the other, they have all dismissed the possibility of associating with a sovereign Quebec. What nonsense! What dangerous nonsense for all Canadians! Moreover, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has so brilliantly demonstrated, such an undertaking can only lead to a dead end.

It is obvious that the separatist government of Mr. Lévesque is dishonest. Unable to bear the consequences of a separation, they want to have the best of both worlds, the political advantages of separation and the economic advantages resulting from an association with Canada. Mr. Speaker, all this comes down to the destruction of a political and economic association which already exists between the provinces, replacing it by a type of association they want to be strictly economic but which, in spite of my willingness to understand, would be built on undermined bases. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, our federal system is already an association based on a common interest which amounts to the will to live collectively. Provincial governments represent regional interests in their provinces. They are in a better position to understand the problems, the needs of their people because, Mr. Speaker, the

#### *The Address—Mr. Gourd*

geographical, economic and social diversity of the country necessarily brings about regional differences that should not be ignored. But unlike the provincial governments, the Canadian government does not represent any one province in particular, but all of them at the same time. This Canadian government is not a foreign entity to Canadians as Mr. Lévesque would like them to believe, it is the men and women of Canada. It ensures fair sharing among the provinces, the redistribution of wealth which sometimes tends to cater more to the needs of one area, sometimes to those of another. The sharing, the redistribution, are done in the greatest respect for democratic principles and freedom. Federalism, this political and economic association we enjoy, is in my opinion far superior to a strictly economic association as, for instance, the common market. Why? Because we were able to combine economic performance, mutual aid and fraternity. Obviously at times some policies tend to favour one area over another, but in the long run all areas benefit because the economic and political strength of Canada transcends all regional and provincial boundaries.

Before that reality, the separatist government of Mr. Lévesque wants to enjoy every economic benefit offered by Canada, but does not want to assist other needy provinces. It wants to receive but does not want to give. However, I ask you, who would accept an association on such an egoistic and inhuman basis? Moreover, such association gives rise to insuperable problems which Mr. Lévesque is avoiding at any cost. For example let us take the monetary policy. Mr. Lévesque wants his separatist government to be in a position to draft its own legislation, to levy its taxes, in short to be a sovereign state. He adds, however, that Quebec would use the Canadian currency. Now if Quebec incurred debts here and there, the remainder of Canada would be unable to intervene. What would happen in a particularly difficult period if Quebec were unable to keep its promises? Who would then cushion the fall of the Canadian dollar? Who would have been the instigator of that crisis, Quebec or the remainder of Canada? Such are the kinds of unresolved problems which Canadians of all regions should underline so that Quebeckers will realize the merits of federalism and the danger which they are facing.

Under those circumstances, all federal members, putting aside their ideological and political differences, must under their mandate uphold the federal system. How should they defend it? Well, they do not have to make up the advantages of the system but merely to point them out, because up to now, the PQ party has deemed advisable for quite obvious reasons to state only its negative aspects.

I would now like to emphasize that there is no question of hiding the weaknesses of our federal system, because by doing so we would be as much guilty of dishonesty as the present Quebec government, and even worse, we would be going against democracy itself by misleading Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no doubt that our system can and should be improved, to better meet the needs and aspira-