

*The Address—Mr. Chénier*

long in showing their gratitude to the man who had sacrificed his personal plans to serve the interests of his country. Those feelings are also mine, Mr. Speaker. Scarcely two months after the election, on February 18 last, the Prime Minister realized that it was urgent to call Parliament and we saw that the new government intends to discharge vigorously its mandate during the Thirty-second Parliament.

The Speech from the Throne clearly establishes that it is this government's priority to introduce legislation to meet the present needs of this country: energy supplies; the necessity of setting oil prices according to indicators of our economy and markets; the urgency of exploring today for new forms of renewable energy; employment and the need to make available to certain groups like women and the handicapped the same opportunities as to the rest of the labour force; interest rates and the urgency to protect those who feel the security of their very home is in jeopardy. Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne also revealed the new government's determination to fight against the forces whose goal is the separation of our country. I would like to deal mostly with that problem, Mr. Speaker, by speaking to my brothers, sisters and cousins of Quebec.

I want at the outset to remind all my friends from Quebec that on February 18 last they elected a great friend who has never failed in his duty to defend their interests. I am talking, of course, about Pierre Trudeau whom 68.3 per cent of the Quebec electorate have chosen to lead them out of their current dire straits. One must not forget that only 41 per cent chose to elect Mr. René Lévesque on November 15, 1976, and that was because he had strategically decided to subtly modify the rules of the game of his grand project of independence. Since the advent of Mr. Trudeau, in 1968, Quebec has gained ground in Canada. Thanks to the aggressiveness and the hard work of this man, your province has gained the respect of her neighbours and an affluence never before achieved in her history, contrary to what the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) had to say. To my mind, he stands much closer to the PQ forces than the federalist cause.

Moreover, I remind the people of Quebec not to forget their numerous relatives who have settled outside your province ever since the turn of the century. In my opinion, the act you are about to make on May 20 next will represent the most serious threat to the very existence of your relatives who live outside Quebec. I am very much concerned by this dramatic moment and it goes without saying that my constituents are also concerned, since at least 40 per cent of them have blood ties with you. You think you are a minority outside English Canada, yet my family, my relatives and I live outside Quebec in communities with high concentrations of French Canadians, in an Anglophone province, and we have ever less reason to complain. Imagine, today we can live, work, attend university, have fun, shop and pray in the very language our parents spoke when they left Quebec to settle in another area of the country.

In leaving Quebec, our parents did not abandon their customs, heritage or traditions. To the contrary, our marvellous country made it possible for the Quebec roots, the roots of our founders, to spread everywhere west of your province. Travel around the country, dear fellow citizens, and you will discover small Quebecs outside your province, at Chapleau, Foleyet, Gogama, Timmins, Iroquois Falls, Hearst where most people can live exclusively in French, Kapuskasing, Sudbury, North Bay. In short, if you are not already aware of it, northern Ontario and other areas of the province are full of communities where people live just like you.

We can live and breathe the way we want today because of negotiations and compromise with our province. By nature, French Canadians do not give up easily. On the other hand, it is not their habit to provoke confrontations leading to violence, but they do not give up. Their determination and their patience tell them that in time they will acquire rights. It is precisely those rights that we, as a minority in Ontario, enjoy. Despite what our provincial elected representatives might say, they are not bestowing privileges on us, rather we are regaining the rights that the Fathers of Confederation gave us. Those rights will have to be enshrined in a new constitution in order to avoid any future misunderstanding.

We also live and breathe the way we want today because of perseverance and because of such events as the election of Pierre Trudeau to the leadership of this country. His sense of justice, his vision and his efforts in such a short time, because 12 years is indeed a very short time, have speeded up the development of the country and changed its character. First, there was the recognition of the two official languages, then the promotion of economic development in the so-called frontier areas of the country such as northern Ontario, where there are abundant natural resources to be found, and the decentralization of government services which is so important for us.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has certainly not stopped growing. Right now it is going through a critical period where its identity is being questioned because of the many changes that have occurred in the last 12 years. Canadians have come to a point now where they must take in all these changes and decide whether or not they will make the accommodations required to live in this new life style. That is the plain truth that English Canada is faced with over the Quebec situation. That is also the hard truth that English Canada must swallow, namely that it cannot deny the French minority its historical right to live according to its customs and in its own language. The battle is not over in Ontario, nor is it in Quebec for that matter. Both factions will have to compromise a lot, but I suggest that now is not the time to rush things unduly.

If our Quebec friends truly believe that a Yes vote on May 20 will result in a final solution, I advise them to examine closely all the factors in Mr. Lévesque's project. This man's strategy is smart and crafty. He will waste no time negotiating, you know that. Every time the provinces have taken part