

The fact is that Quebec is the only nation of more than seven million people in the western world not to have attained political sovereignty. I invite members of this House to reflect upon this. As a political structure Canada is the exception rather than the rule, an exception that is not working well, to understate the case.

The particular situation of Quebec was inadvertently recognized by a member of the Canadian delegation to the final GATT negotiations in mid-December. As will be recalled, Canada was seeking to be exempted from the clause attacking subsidies by sub-national governments because, in his words: "There is only one Quebec". He was right of course.

Let us ask ourselves: Who was in the driver's seat during the European revolution of 1989-90 which saw German reunification and the accession to political sovereignty of so many nations in central and eastern Europe? Was it the supranational institutions, the EC, NATO, the Warsaw pact, or was it the different nations, each one of them seizing the chance of a lifetime?

In short, Quebecers aspire to what is considered normal in the western world.

The paradox of English Canada pops up with the second part of the discussion about national sovereignty, the part that deals with the issue of Canadian sovereignty. A large part of the free trade election of November 1988 was spent, in English Canada, on the impact of the free trade agreement on the sovereignty of Canada. Everybody agreed that this was something important that should not be tampered with. However if Canada's political sovereignty vis-à-vis the U.S.A. is valuable and must be preserved, why is it that Quebec's political sovereignty vis-à-vis Canada is depicted as irrational in the anglophone media of the land? When the preceding Prime Minister said that she preserved Canadian sovereignty during the last stage of the NAFTA negotiations, why is it that nobody rolled their eyes and derided this quaint idea of sovereignty? What mysterious alchemy transforms the quality of a concept according to the people to whom it applies or according to the year of accession to sovereignty? One must not forget that independent nations are not born. They are made.

All this does not prevent Canadians and Quebecers from having quite a few things in common: a respect for democracy, a large degree of openness to people of other cultures, and a fascination with our neighbours south of the border. And they both love their country. However, the problem is and has been for a very long time, that it is not the same country.

*[Translation]*

Make no mistake about it. We will not stop reminding the people that, in order to legitimize his power play against Quebec National Assembly in 1982, Pierre Trudeau was able to call

*The Address*

upon the support of Quebec's Liberal members of Parliament in order to claim to speak on behalf of Quebec.

• (1550)

We will repeat as often as necessary that the government party no longer speaks for Quebec. You can also be sure that we will not lose sight—and will not allow anyone to lose sight—of the fact that the new Prime Minister is the very man who led the assault against Quebec, in 1981, and ignored the quasi-unanimous repudiation by the Quebec National Assembly.

The Charlottetown episode followed a similar pattern. Did we not see a block of Conservative members from Quebec, who had initially got into politics to repair the damage done by the 1982 patriation, side with the Liberals in an effort to seal the fate, once and for all, of Quebec's historical claims?

The 1992 referendum results dispelled any lingering ambiguity. The rejection of the Accord from coast to coast ended all hopes that some may still have had for a renewed federal system in Canada. You take it or leave it as it is.

The Prime Minister himself came to the same conclusion. Did he not announce shortly after coming into office that he would not even attempt such a reform?

Thus we should be able to make in the clear light of day the decision we are supposed to make by referendum in Quebec. We are left with only two choices: either we settle for the status quo that almost every federalist in Quebec since Jean Lesage has denounced or, the alternative is clear, Quebec attains full sovereignty, with full powers to assume full responsibility. The identity and roles of the players would be clarified at the same time.

There certainly seems to be a sort of poetic justice in all this. The henchman of the dastardly deed in 1982, who has since become Prime Minister, will soon have to ask the people of Quebec to turn down the sovereignty deal in favour of the constitutional one which had earned him their reprobation in the first place. And he will have to do it on his own, without the support that his mentor, Pierre Trudeau, claimed to have in Quebec. You can see why he does not want the talk Constitution, as he said.

By its presence and actions in this House, the Bloc Québécois will be doing every Quebecer and Canadian a service, whether they like it or not, by preventing them from going back to square one. Now that the Meech and Charlottetown accords have stripped the varnish of political correctness from the Canadian federal system, revealing its obstinate fixedness, everyone is immune to promises of renewal. So much so that nobody dares make any, not even to score political points.

This imposes upon us a basic civic duty, which consists in sparing ourselves three more decades of fruitless discussion, endless attempts and lost illusions. This waste of resources, this dilution of collective hope, this misuse of our energy has been going on for too long already. All we have to show today for the