

The Address

Gaspesian Peninsula, the riding of Charlevoix or the St-Maurice Valley instead of Toronto or Hamilton. We must have national criteria but, once those criteria have been clearly established, we don't need this bureaucratic duplication of services to implement the program. We can let the regions take care of regional priorities, instead of having the central government manage the day-to-day implementation of the program.

[English]

Certain principles have to prevail because this is a very important element. Specifically, any change in the distribution of powers should guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens.

[Translation]

Any review would have to ensure that our two main linguistic communities are maintained and strengthened. This principle is fundamental to Canada's existence and should be generously endorsed by all levels of government. Furthermore, Quebec must be recognized as the linchpin of the French fact in this country.

[English]

Any change in the distribution of powers must guarantee respect for and the growth of aboriginal peoples. Any change to promote the rights and growth of cultural communities, any change in the distribution of powers should maximize the quality and standard of living of all Canadians. Any change should facilitate the working of the Canadian economic union. Any change in the distribution of power should ensure, on a national scale, the pursuit of social justice through the sharing of resources between regions and citizens.

[Translation]

Any review must ensure that governments remain sovereign within their respective jurisdictions. We must try and clarify the situation and ensure there is less duplication than was the case in the past.

Any review should consider the diversity of this country's regions, including the distinct identity of Quebec society.

[English]

I have said many times that the Cullen-Couture agreement between the federal government and the province of Quebec, concerning the problem of population in Quebec, should be constitutionalized. It has

worked well for a long time and now should be given a constitutional guarantee.

We have to talk about sharing the spending power. We all agree that there is a great temptation to sometimes abuse the spending power in this Parliament and everyone has agreed for a long time that there should be limits. It would be simpler to have a more functional division of powers, while ensuring that the national objective can be met. Otherwise how can we compete in the world of tomorrow? We should not abuse our spending power. We need to have limits. This issue has been on the table for a long time. It was there 20 years ago and it has to be resolved. It is not complicated. All the taxes have existed for generations. We only have to put them together to have a package.

Take the Supreme Court. It is a request of the provinces, particularly Quebec, that they be able to recommend people to sit on the Supreme Court. As the Supreme Court is more and more a constitutional court, I agree that we should have more input from the provinces. As Minister of Justice, I know what any Minister of Justice is looking for when he appoints a judge to the Supreme Court. He wants to appoint the best person he can find. This is how he eventually will be judged by his peers. Any Minister of Justice takes pride in being instrumental in the appointments to the Supreme Court.

When I was Minister of Justice there were two appointments, Madam Justice Wilson—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: —whom I can talk about because she is not there anymore. I take a lot of pride in being instrumental in the appointment of that lady as the first woman on the Supreme Court. Not only that, she was a fantastic judge. And I did not even know for whom she voted before I asked her to be a judge. That is the way it should be.

We need a deadlock-breaking mechanism. We need it. Otherwise there would be a paralysis of the court if there is a conflict between provinces and the federal government on appointments.

• (1050)

We should have objective criteria but we should have a deadlock breaking mechanism. There is nothing worse than if we were to start using the Supreme Court to play