

Supply

and in the eighties it became "Souveraineté-Association". I prefer to talk about the "Beau risque" of the seventies. But now, the change of direction of March 1995 has turned into no direction at all.

Why do I say that? Because the Bloc Québécois with its separation option does not know what to offer Quebecers. The member for Longueuil speaks about the debt as if it belonged exclusively to the federal government. Quebecers also participated in that debt. If Quebec becomes independent, the quality of life of its citizens will drop from the 9th position, where it stands right now, to the 19th. The member also said that the political system is not working, that it does not meet the expectations or requirements of Quebec and that we created an artificial economy in Canada.

My question for the member is this: If he does not approve of Canada's political system, if our economy does not meet his expectations, why is it that in their plan, the Bloc members say they want sovereignty, but they also want to maintain the same economic union and the same political system? Is there not a contradiction there? I am asking the member because he said himself that after the referendum, if the answer is no, there will still be 54 members promoting independence for Quebec.

I want to ask the member if that means that all Bloc Québécois members will resign if their option is rejected during the fall referendum, as he claims?

Mr. Leblanc (Longueuil, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather strange that when we say that we want an economic association with the rest of Canada, the Liberal Party, especially the Quebec members and the Prime Minister, who is also from Quebec, say: "We do not want any association with the rest of Canada". And yet, they too are Quebecers.

You see, this economic association is unavoidable, no matter what. We do a lot of trade with Ontario and western Canada. As a matter of fact, the West sells more in Quebec than we sell there. There is a deficit. Ontario buys slightly over one billion more from Quebec than we purchase from Ontario. If we were to become sovereign, without an economic association, Ontario would have a trade deficit with Quebec.

In order not to disturb this economy which is working and will go on, in any case, and which business people and economists will want to keep going, we say that we need some kind of economic association. No matter the form it takes, we will need some kind of economic association to manage and continue to manage our trade.

• (1710)

Moreover, we must say that, at the present time, it is harder to trade among provinces than it is with the United States through

the FTA. I find this terrible. It seems to me that it should be easy for Canada and Quebec to have an economic association at least as open as the one we have with the United States.

In Quebec, we tend to trade north-south, because the market there is very large, as in New York City and Boston. It is said that there are close to 100 million consumers within a range of 1,000 kilometres from Montreal. This explains why we tend to trade with the South. But this does not mean that we do not want to maintain our economic links with the rest of Canada. To achieve this, we say that we need an economic association. It could be managed by some kind of a council which could sit, perhaps here in Ottawa, with delegates from the government in Quebec City, MPs delegated by the government in Ottawa, who could sit once in a while to manage this united council. This is not complicated, this is simple. Life goes on.

Any way, one cannot claim that governments can do everything. It is the economy which fosters good trade relations.

I hear the Liberals laugh over there, and I think they are being rather foolish. I cannot understand why they are laughing. It bothers me to hear them laugh, I do not like it. I heard the Prime Minister, himself a Quebecer, say that he does not want a union with the rest of Canada, that he has no need for it. I do not know what he is going to do. He is going to die alone. I do not know; maybe he will have to move to Toronto, because he lives in Quebec. I think he lives in Quebec, although I am not sure. I rather think that he has been living in Ontario for 30 years. I am not sure about that. When I listen to him, I wonder if the language, the words he uses are not words that Quebecers were using 30 years ago. The language of Quebecers has evolved, but the Prime Minister talks as people used to 30 years ago. I think that he has been living in Ontario for 30 years and that he seldom goes back to Quebec. The language there has evolved.

So, I find it a little strange to hear Quebec Liberals—because that applies only to Quebec Liberals—say that they do not want an economic association with the rest of Canada. I am really disappointed. I do not understand.

In this regard, in the interests of all Quebecers, it is high time for us to be sovereign so that we can grow and also have an economic association with the rest of Canada that will come naturally, I am sure. Some may say that they do not want it, but that is not true; it will come naturally. Business people, professionals, economists, all those who are in business will want it to be maintained.

Planes full of business people link Montreal and Toronto every day. I used to be in business and I used to go regularly to Toronto to buy products. I was president of a wholesale company and I used to buy a lot of products in Toronto. I went there