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ripped out of the country if Quebec leaves and I believe the rest of the country will fall apart. I will not let you do that.

The Speaker: Again, I know that we are getting not close to the heart, we are in the heart, but I insist that all hon. members please address the Chair. It is very important. The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. Please excuse me, I did not know you had a commentary. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Bouchard: Just a short one, Mr. Speaker, to thank you for your wise words.

I would like to say to the member who just addressed the House that I completely respect what she said. I feel genuine sympathy for her emotion because this debate is very much about deep and fundamental emotions.

At the same time I would like to say, if I may, that to respect the vision of someone is also to make sure that one does not impose one's vision on another. This is about democracy. It is not for me as an individual to impose anything on other people. It is not for me to make any decision for collectivity, but it is for the Quebec people to make a decision. Those things are not easy and they have been said before.

• (1140)

I remember very well the last debate about Meech. We had a very limited debate about Meech. I heard a few moments ago the secretary for parliamentary affairs say that the Bloc was very happy to see Meech fumbled but it was not true. I fought hard and for a long time for Meech.

I was not the champion of Meech. Prime Minister Mulroney was. I remember that during those debates at some point Prime Minister Mulroney implied that if Meech was rejected the future of Canada might be compromised. He said something like that. I noticed then there was a very strong negative reaction all over Canada that the Prime Minister was too emotional, that he was not realistic, but here we are.

We tried to get Meech through. We almost begged the rest of Canada. We are proud people but we begged anyway. We asked the rest of Canada to subscribe to five minimal conditions that Quebec proposed, to go to the table and sign this Constitution on the dotted line where there is no signature, Quebec's signature.

I spent two years of my life doing that. I even accepted the bold risk to do that. I left my sovereignist family in 1984 to work for that because I thought, like Prime Minister Mulroney and many people in Quebec, a majority of Quebecers, it was worthwhile to try to reconcile the country. The minimal requirement we could set up to save the honour; accept that something very important in Quebec politics be enshrined in the Constitution, not in the powers but in the preliminaries of the Constitution; that Quebec should be recognized as a distinct society, which is to recognize us as a people. This is the fundamental thing,

people in Quebec feel like a people. We cannot change that. It is a fact of public life.

Mr. Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Under Standing Order 43(2) and on behalf of the Reform whip I would like to inform the House that our caucus members will be dividing their time when they speak.

The Speaker: It is so noted and I return to the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from the Bloc should not in any way, shape or form be surprised at the fact that this party would include them in this discussion.

Unlike some parties, we stand for including all Canadians in our decisions. This is not a family feud. What we have is an effort by a group of individuals in the House to fracture the country and I, like the member across the way, will not stand for it.

This is in part accomplished by misleading the people of Quebec as to what is really going on in the country. I would ask at some time what Canada has done against the people of Quebec. I will tell members in part.

The Government of Canada gives to the people of Quebec in transfer payments more money than what the people of Quebec give out to the federal government. I would also say that the federal governments in past years have pandered to the province of Quebec in an effort to keep it within the fold. This is special status. This is special treatment and it only causes division. It is divisive within the country.

In this world, we have tribalism: one group or tribe against another. It is perhaps the singular, most divisive problem that we have in this world. Francophones, anglophones, men, women, black, white, it is all the same thing. All we can hope for in the world is that we are treated equally under the law, that we are free of prejudice. What we make of our lives as individuals is up to ourselves.

I have a question for the hon. member from the Bloc. What is so wrong with a country where we are all treated equally, where we all have the same rights under our laws, where culture and language is the responsibility of each province whether it is Quebec, New Brunswick or British Columbia? What is so wrong with a vision of Canada that includes all Canadians? I would like to ask the hon. member what is so wrong with that.

• (1145)

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, let me say two things to the hon. member.

First, Quebec has already been excluded from the constitutional family by the rest of Canada. Something we should remember is that in 1982 the federal government ganged up with the English speaking provinces to impose the Constitution on