

boss, that it was the greatest and that it must stick its nose everywhere. It was terrible, simply shocking.

In 1984, the cumulative debt totalled \$170 billion. That year, to show its superiority, the liberal government, with Mr. Lalonde as Minister of Finance, presented its last budget before being defeated that same year. Its deficit was estimated at \$38 billion and its revenues at \$70 billion. The government was borrowing \$38 billion, which meant it was spending almost 150 per cent of its anticipated revenues. It collected \$70 billion and borrowed \$38 billion. That was the Lalonde budget. All that, I repeat, only to show that it was superior, to show Quebecers that it was the big boss, that it spent and controlled.

As you know, in the 18th century, the Emperor Napoleon spent 135 per cent of what he could collect in revenues to maintain his empire.

• (1700)

But in 1984, Lalonde and Trudeau were spending 165 per cent to maintain their superiority here in Ottawa. That is what happened. People wonder why we are deep in debt and why things are not working. Why? Because two nations want to grow and they are fighting to see who will be the strongest. We decided that the best way was to have two countries so that both nations could grow.

The same thing happened in 1984. I arrived here as a Conservative in 1984. We had three slogans: decentralization of powers, national reconciliation and spending cuts. Those are the three reasons why I joined the Conservatives and why we were elected in 1984. Some said that a decentralization of powers was needed, and I agreed with that. In any case, we had lost the referendum, so we decided to take the risk of starting over again if that were possible.

The Conservatives were well-intentioned. They said that they would decentralize powers. A national reconciliation was necessary. Everybody was fighting, so we had to clean up our act. A reduction in spending was obviously needed. We had an accumulated debt of \$175 billion, which was way too much. That is what we said. The Conservative government did cut spending and did make extraordinary efforts toward a national reconciliation. But you know what happened to Meech.

The Meech Lake Accord failed because it provided for a reduction in the federal government's spending power. That is why it failed. It failed because Mr. Chretien, the current Prime Minister, did not want to see the spending power of the federal government reduced. He used the premiers of New Brunswick and of Newfoundland, Mr. McKenna and Mr. Wells, and also Mrs. Carstairs, who is now a senator, to bring about the failure of the Meech Lake Accord because it limited the spending power of the federal government.

Supply

That was the major problem. We were absolutely right in asking for that, but it was the reason the accord was rejected. The leader of the present government is the one who caused the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. He is the one most responsible for the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. Everyone knows it. It is not something we made up.

What were the consequences? The consequences were that the Tories spent even more to prove their superiority. Despite spending cuts, they spent approximately \$30 billion, \$32 billion annually in excess of what they collected, that is a yearly deficit of \$30 billion, \$32 billion dollars. They continued to artificially inflate the economy, to raise inflation. They created a kind of artificial economy.

The economic growth was between 3 and 3.9 per cent, but the real economic growth—if the government had not invested \$30 billion, \$32 billion dollars to prove its superiority—would probably have been 2 per cent. Real economic growth such as we are seeing in Europe and elsewhere. Real economic growth of 1.5 or 2 per cent per year. But no. The federal government borrowed abroad and now 40 per cent of the \$600 billion we owe are foreign owned. They artificially inflated the economy, and we are now faced with this big problem.

What I want to say is that because of the federal government's desire to centralize, to prove that it is in control, the Canadian economy has been destroyed. Canada is bankrupt as a result. It has to stop. Even if, tomorrow morning or in the fall, Quebecers lost the referendum, the problem would be the same. Fifty per cent of the sovereignists in Quebec still would want to prove their superiority, to continue to develop according to their needs, to their priorities. The problem would be the same.

• (1705)

I am telling Quebecers through you, Mr. Speaker, that they must vote for sovereignty. They have to create a new country for the good of Canada and for the good of Quebec. We must strive to do so. There is no alternative, otherwise we will never get out of it. For the good of our children, for the good of our grandchildren, for the good of Quebec and Canada, we should build a sound economic union. If we had some kind of union council, with delegates from the two countries, it would be fine. But we should each have the opportunity to develop according to our own priorities and according to our own culture.

I guarantee you that we would be better off not centralizing, as it is done right now, but becoming two separate sovereign nations linked by an economic union. There is some kind of agreement on the management of such an union.

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the second time the member for Longueuil refers to the debt. In his speech, he said that in the sixties our slogan was "Maîtres chez nous", in the seventies it was "Égalité ou indépendance"