

The Address

party's representative and the voice of this Parliament before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: He represented us before the commission but, at the same time, he had many long sessions with members on this side of the House, resulting in the presentation we made before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission on December 18. This presentation already contained elements of the proposal we submitted in Montreal three weeks ago. I would like to take this opportunity to explain them today.

First, we should make a statement on the nature of Canada. This statement would indicate the will of all Canadians to live in this country, in the federal State that is ours. It would also set forth the values we share, including our attachment to both official languages and our commitment to our multicultural heritage. It would recognize the crucial role played by the aboriginal nations in our society and the distinct identity of Quebec society.

[*English*]

It will also be a good occasion to again recognize our unwavering commitment to equality of men and women in our Constitution because there are some doubts in the minds of a lot of Canadians.

Second, we will make sure the Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to be the cornerstone of our Constitution. Why? Because we look forward to the next century. In the next century, the majority of Canadians will not be from either French or English backgrounds. What can we guarantee the people who have a different colour, a different language or a different religion? What better can we guarantee to them than their individual rights in their Constitution? It will be clear.

The third element of our proposition is the economic union in Canada. By 1992 there will be more mobility in Europe than we have in Canada. We recognize, and we want it to be in the Constitution, that we have a common market in Canada. We are starting to have a common market with the United States and Mexico, and yet we cannot sell products among Canadians. There is a producer in Dorchester in Beauséjour, two miles from the border of Nova Scotia. He who cannot sell his

product to the Government of Nova Scotia because he lives two miles from the border. We do not have the mobility of people like they have in Europe. The time has come to have mobility of people, goods, services and capital in Canada.

The government in the Speech from the Throne talks about it, but it says in the Allaire report it will not happen until 1995. Even those who virtually do not want any link with Canada recognize the need to have a real common market in Canada, so why wait until 1995? Put it in the Constitution right away.

As I said before, and repeat, reform of the Senate is extremely important. I believe in it. I was on the other side long enough to know that sometimes we are driven by the heat of the moment, the push of bureaucrats and so on, and reassured by the support of our troops, quite often saying: "Try that, minister. You are a good guy, try that, show you are strong". However they do not think enough at times about the reaction of the people. The members of the caucus have virtually no choice. If they shut you down, it could cause an election.

On the other hand, if in the Upper House there would be another vote—it might be veto, a suspension of veto and in some cases an absolute veto—the politicians of this House and the minister would have to reflect twice. They would have to compromise when they go there, they do not want to compromise in this House. That would give a lot of satisfaction to the people of western Canada and Atlantic Canada who think they do not have the numbers of their side. This system works in Australia, Germany and in many other nations. Why not have it in Canada, and quickly?

The other point I want to make concerns the natives of Canada. I was Minister of Indian Affairs for more than six years. I have always felt terrible about this social problem. We have to deal with it quickly. We have to do something that they have asked for, in my judgment, for a long time. In 1981 we started to put aboriginal rights in the Constitution. We have to make progress. Whenever I talk with aboriginal people in Canada, they tell me they want aboriginal self-government in the Constitution.

I think it should be done. Progress will be made. We have made enough mistakes concerning natives. We should let them make a few mistakes. They have the sense of dignity that they need. They were here before