

am old enough to remember that. I have said it during the MacKenzie King reign over his crystal glass, during the conscription crisis, the FLQ crisis, the election of the *Partie Québécois*, and the referendum in 1980. Solemnly, but with more cynicism, I am saying it today. Will 1990 be the crucial year for Canada?

● (1610)

[Translation]

I have listened to you on the other side of the House this afternoon and I can honestly tell you that for us in Quebec, the Meech Lake Accord has reached a point of no return: it is make it or break it.

My purpose is not to tell you the history of Meech; I think that you know it much better than I do. We had six hours of committee hearings with Mr. Trudeau who never refuses to provide us with garbage cans into which we can throw all the concepts of Canada that he does not like. I do not know if you can guess how we Quebecers are hurt by his stinging irony. Collectively we are worth no more than he, of course, but we do not believe in the same rigid federal vision of Canada. Is it a crime against humanity to hold a different opinion than his? Are we still in a democracy here in this House? A francophone Quebecer can hardly stand to hear all the things that are being said for and against Meech Lake, so I will come right out and say—

[English]

I have come to the end of my patience and of my hopes for ever seeing *la terre Québec* at rest within *la terre Canada*.

Of course, the saying and the despair of an older woman, gently described as a “has been”, carries no great political clout; but certain truths must be said.

[Translation]

—out of sheer moral decency, Mr. Speaker, and simple intellectual and political honesty—

[English]

I am proud to be a Quebecer and to have more than 300 years of continuity behind me, but I am prouder still to have had the joy, as a grandmother, to stand beside my husband when our daughter gave us our first grandson, born in France, and a second one born here, both of a French father. Thus, we, as Rolland, were confirmed in our Frenchness and because as—

[Translation]

—their very distant Rolland ancestor, Eric and Laurent—

[English]

—will also choose to live in Canada with us. We knew then that we would survive as a family within the distinct society which some of your ancestors, as well as ours, built, enriched and died for. Hewers of wood?

[Translation]

—no, my English friends;

[English]

Dreamers of wood. I am proud to be a member of the first family that proved to the country that when opportunities arise

or are created the results are as bold and as good as yours in your distinct society.

“Why”, said Jean Baptiste Rolland in 1835, “should I import pulp to print books when so many trees are growing around my house in the Laurentides?” He went to Brussels, came back with engineers and built an empire. He was then selected to become a senator for Mille Isles, as I have the honour to be today.

So we are part of that distinct society and are recognized as such. We are also proud to prove that today Quebec is strong, vibrant and perfectly able to live its own destiny, if you doubt it. These words may leave most of you cold and indifferent; they are at the very core of my long involvement in Quebec and the reasons for my coming back here when, for a time, I thought I had nowhere to go but up there or down there, but who knows.

During the referendum of May 1980—

[Translation]

—our quest reflected the grandeur of our ideals and our love for Canada, sentiments that are dismally lacking in the attitude of pro and anti Meech groups to Quebec. At the time, the stakes were very high. “Yes” opened the door to sovereignty-association, while “no” expressed the desire to renew the federation that subsequently, under the magic wand of the federal Liberal government led by Mr. Trudeau, was to patriate the Constitution without Quebec’s consent.

In 1987, Quebec submitted five conditions under which it would return to the constitutional fold, conditions that most constitutional and political experts agreed were the least demanding Quebec had ever proposed since the first constitutional conference chaired by Honoré Mercier.

[English]

What have we seen after that?

[Translation]

—a general outcry, a shaking of fists—

[English]

Angry words, accusations the whole artillery of prejudices are always dormant under the service of our political parties, which have emerged once again. The Meech Lake Accord means equal needs for Canada. The Meech Lake Accord spells the death of federalism. The Meech Lake Accord will weaken the federal government—a desire voiced loudly by most provinces as we toured Canada, in Pépin-Robarts, for more than a year. If this is true, can someone explain to me why John Robarts, who was co-president of our company, accepted these terms? He was one of the most respected Canadians that I know of. Would he have signed those accords that led to Meech Lake if he had thought that doing so would dismantle Canada? I do not think so, but I think we have used the Meech Lake Accord to raise more animosity and prejudices.

Yet, the ten premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada signed the agreement under the full light of television, not in a secret Shangri-la summit meeting. Yes, the subject matter had to be discussed privately before they could come to any