

*The Address*

to remind people of certain true facts that have been kept in the dark.

It is very simple and one does not need a long list of statistics to understand what it is all about. In fact, one just has to look at the most recent data available, which show that Quebec receives from the federal government about the same amount it sends to Ottawa in taxes, converting of course the present deficits of the federal government in future taxes. Thanks to their deficits, the federal authorities can spend in each province more than they levy in taxes. But just wait to see the bill that the next generation will have to pay!

Some are in a hurry to point out that, as a poorer member of the federation, Quebec will receive equalization payments totalling \$3.7 billion in 1993-94. But the original purpose of equalization was to bridge the gap between poorer and richer provinces, was it not? In other words, equalization should represent a real supplement for those provinces which receive it. It so happens that Quebec does not get a supplement. The equalization payments that Quebec receives are only to compensate for what the province does not get from the federal government in other areas. So Quebec has to finance its own equalization payments. In reality, equalization in Canada is a transfer from rich English-speaking provinces to poor English-speaking provinces.

• (1620)

For Quebec, equalization is only meagre compensation for the considerable loss of potential revenue in the form of federal spending on job creation. For instance, the equalization system does not compensate for the substantial advantage enjoyed by Ontario's economy as a result of concentrated federal spending on research and development.

This unfair division of government spending is not just some perverse result of the federal system but is part and parcel of that system.

So how does all this fit in with what we intend to do during the months to come?

First of all, there is a way to reduce the federal deficit by several billion dollars, starting with the next fiscal year, without affecting the social safety net and transfer payments to the provinces which are basically earmarked for social programs. This would have a significant impact on financial markets and thus on interest rates. A drop of one percentage point would put \$8 billion annually back into the pockets of consumers and businesses and at the same time ease the servicing of federal and

provincial debts. The impact would be vastly superior to that of the government's infrastructure program.

In the present context, however, it is not enough to simply reduce the deficit. Steps must also be taken to strengthen productivity, the backbone of the Canadian and Quebec economies. If interest rates continue to go down, there will be a recovery in the consumption of durable goods, including housing and cars. However, the production side will also need a boost. This would include helping more vulnerable sectors find a new niche. That is the way of the jobs of the future. Increasing research and development, an area where Canada is clearly lagging behind other Western countries, and easing the conversion of much of our military industry would be a priority as far as we are concerned. Once the economy has been nudged on its way to recovery, it will generate tax revenues that will help bring the federal deficit back to acceptable proportions. Cuts may be necessary, but cuts alone are not enough.

In concluding, I would like to repeat that unlike the government, members of the Bloc Québécois will not evade any of the issues this Parliament will have to face. We will not tolerate the government's refusal to deal with Quebec's aspirations. Let it not be said that it was for nothing that the majority of federalists and all Quebec sovereignists struggled, each in their own way, for thirty years to give Quebec the tools to develop as a people. What Quebec started in the Sixties must be allowed to come to fruition.

After the concept of a nation was established, after mobilizing Quebec society, after the efforts of Jean Lesage, the manoeuvring of Robert Bourassa and the courage of René Lévesque, there must be more than the evasive platitudes of the Prime Minister. He should realize that the history of Quebec did not stop on a certain night in November in 1981, behind closed doors in the Château Laurier. I suggest he look at the 54 members of this party sitting here today and remember who sent us here and the mandate we were given.

Then he will realize that Quebec's future as a sovereign country is just one step ahead, a sovereign country that is Canada's neighbour and friend.

I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons and member for Roberval,

That the following words be added to the Address: "This House deplores the fact that Your Excellency's advisers have shown themselves to be unconcerned about matters of extreme importance, such as the placing of public finances on a sounder footing and the cutting of fat from the federal administration; lack of vision in dealing with the economy, as made evident by the inadequacy of their proposed measures for promoting employment and by their perpetuation of the existing confusion in human resource programs; are ignorant of Quebec's legitimate political aspirations; and have