

*The Address*

were not to pass, English Canada was saying "no" to Quebec.

That was not true. Having created that impression in order to put pressure on everybody, it was no wonder the people of Quebec felt rejected.

If we have a referendum where we address all the problems of Canadians, what will happen? The very day that we have this referendum where we will say to the people of Canada that we need the majority of western Canadians, of Ontarians, of Quebecers and of the people from Atlantic Canada and it is acceptable, it will be a great day, Mr. Speaker.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Chrétien:** That day, the Canadian people who are not from Quebec will say: "No, we have been together for 200 years. We started as a small colony and have become a great country. We understand that it is possible and needed to be different and equal at the same time."

That day, everybody will be happy to say that to the people of Quebec. It will give an opportunity to the million francophones outside Quebec to vote on that issue. It will be the day when the francophones of Quebec will say: "We want to stay in Canada." It will be the day when the anglophones of Quebec will be able to say: "We are anglophones. We are Quebecers and we are Canadians at the same time."

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Chrétien:** That very day, the francophones outside Quebec—

[*Translation*]

—the constituents in the riding of Beauséjour, those one million francophones across the country who have a lot more trouble staying French than any fellow citizen born in Quebec. One million francophones will be able to say: I am an Acadian, I am from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island. This is my home; I am a francophone and I am proud of it! I am proud to be from New Brunswick and I am also proud to be a Canadian!

• (1030)

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Chrétien:** If we look at our country's history, we made some very important decisions. At the very heart of the decisions that built this country was the will of francophones to keep and build this country. We refused to join the American Revolution. If we had, perhaps Canada would never have existed.

[*English*]

I hope the people in English Canada know that. If we had decided to join the American revolution, this country might not exist today. If in 1812 de Salaberry had not been at Châteauguay to push them back, we would not be in Canada today. They should know that. The people of western Canada should know who opened the west. It was the voyageurs who left Trois Rivières—La Vérendrye, Radisson, Des Groseilliers—who went there to open the west. Otherwise that part of this country would not be part of Canada. These were Quebecers who did that. In a referendum were all the people who believe in Canada, and I know that the people on the other side believe in Canada.

I was happy to hear my successor in Saint-Maurice talk about Canada the way he did yesterday. I congratulate him for that. With all the federalists and all the people who believe that we have built a country here that is the envy of the world will shake hands the day of the referendum. We want to give Canadians a new constitution so that we have the instrument we need to face the 21st century as a proud and independent country.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Chrétien:** We will be united. It will be a great day when the myth that Quebec had been rejected is gone forever. It will be a great day.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Chrétien:** We have to let the people speak. But we cannot let the people speak without giving them a program. We, in our party, after a lot of discussion, have put the proposition forward.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel who worked very hard last fall as our