

for Laval for nearly 12 years. During that time, I participated in several debates to improve the quality of life of my fellow citizens in Laval, Quebec and Canada. Today, however, it is again with great interest that I rise to express my views on the holding of a referendum which could mean for 24 million Canadians a change in the structure of Parliament and could also influence the quality of life they are now enjoying.

Indeed, the seventies allowed Canadians to enjoy a high standard of living and social peace, while on every other continent violence was rumbling, democracy was crumbling away and inflation eroded the purchasing power of everyone in the world. In Canada, one only has to think, for example, of the price of oil which in several countries is three times as high as in our country when, paradoxically, the purchasing power of those workers is often three times lower than the purchasing power of Canadian workers.

Canada is one of the most beautiful and most privileged countries in the world, with its income per capita in 1978 exceeding that of the United States, Norway, Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany. When one considers the question of real purchasing power in Canada, the situation is even more favourable when Canadian tourists had to pay \$5 for a cup of coffee in Switzerland this year, or \$100 to sleep in a second-rate hotel in Germany, or \$150 per person for a supper in Tokyo, those Canadian tourists realized that Canada with its purchasing power is still a paradise; this is a Canadian fact.

Canada is therefore a rich country, but its integrity must be preserved if we want the eighties to be as stimulating for all those men and women who have taken up the challenge in the past. Indeed, we often refer to the renewal of our constitution, but we forget all the fiscal arrangements and amendments which have been made especially during the last 25 years and more particularly since the beginning of the quiet revolution in Quebec, thanks to the Liberal initiative in 1960. The performance of our country which has recently reached its centenary is not too bad and, fully aware of the potential of our natural resources which have yet to be developed, we can still say that everything remains to be done in Canada. If European countries live for their past, Canada lives for its future, provided all Canadians are ready to take up the challenge together. This future is possible, this challenge can be met if all Canadians agree to meet it and if all of us, as shareholders in Canada, can reap the dividends it will produce.

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This is why it is important to place in the proper context the referendum debate aimed at setting up a separate or sovereign Quebec. Even though the Canadian government is accused of being responsible for everything that is wrong in Quebec, I believe that history and Canadian policies show on the contrary that Quebec, like all the other provinces, has obviously always been able to develop. Canadians have certain social, economic and political advantages which are still only

dreamed about in most countries. This is the Canadian reality for all Quebeckers while sovereignty is an adventure.

It remains a reality for most Quebeckers even if some sociologists, political scientists and other alleged observers pretend that Quebec is the poor relation in Canada and ask Quebeckers to be content with one-seventh of its territory while proposing another system without telling us about its structure or economic advantages, without telling us what will happen when the 135,000 federal public servants in Quebec have to be integrated and without telling us the facts about this new system.

The progression of the separatist movement in the sixties and seventies has followed a plan involving teaching in Quebec schools, its culture and its economy, which ensured that the participation of the Canadian government in all joint programs or those administered by the province with federal funds would be glossed over and that participation by the Canadian government kept silent, preferring to broadcast that federalism was not a viable proposition in Quebec and the money taken out in taxes was not coming back to Quebec. For example, at the official inauguration of the health centre in Ville de Laval on April 10, 1978, the authorities decided to ignore completely the presence of federal MPs for the area. And not only did they ignore it, on that occasion they even forbade the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) to make a speech on behalf of the Canadian government which had contributed \$16 million toward the cost of the building. Through my intervention we succeeded in getting invitations to the ceremony, but the decision remained. The Minister of National Health and Welfare had to agree not to speak. It was strictly forbidden for the representative of the Canadian government to do so on that occasion.

I gave the example of the health centre, but I could name other occasions of nursing home inaugurations whose construction again was financed to the tune of 95 per cent by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, with 50 per cent of the operating deficits covered by the Canadian government. They took pains to prevent the Canadian participation from being referred to on those occasions.

That PQ propaganda has been very subtle and uses every symbol of sovereignty. The use of the lily flag, the use of Mr. Vigneault's *Gens du pays* as a national anthem for their proposed nation, the use of the balcony speech—they even prompt France's invitation to Quebec's premier to go up Louis-Philippe's stairways even though France's investments in North America went to other provinces than Quebec. And this is how with all this careful planning it was possible to tell Quebec that it was not being treated fairly within Canada and that moneys levied by the Canadian government were not returned to Quebec. Here again, I could mention many incidences, for example the events organized by the Quebec state to propel the idea of this sovereignty while always applying in these instances and in this planning Doris Lussier's explosive theory or strategy as explained in the *Journal de Montréal* of June 21, 1978. After a survey in which a renewed federalism