

*Supply*

top down decision making and policy making, the things that have brought status quo federalism into disrepute.

We have weighed both status quo federalism and separatism in the balance and have found both wanting. This has driven us to seek for a vision of a new and better federal union of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, we have evaluated separatism and the existing federal system and we believe that both of these formulas are imperfect. This examination has prompted us to seek a new and improved federal union for Canadian citizens.

• (1015)

[English]

There are two ways to bring into being a new and better vision of a new Canada as a federal state. One is to assemble the first ministers in federal-provincial conferences attended and advised by various academic and interest group elites to focus exclusively on amending the Constitution. This was the approach taken in creating the 1982 Constitution, the Meech Lake accord and the Charlottetown accord. It failed to produce a vision or a form of federalism capable of inspiring a deeper commitment on the part of Canadians to the federal union.

The other approach is to go to hundreds of meetings, big ones, small ones, quiet ones, noisy ones, with the rank and file citizens of the country and to ask these simple questions: "What kind of country do you want to live in as we approach the 21st century? What kind of country do you want your children to live in? What do you want the distinguishing characteristics of that new and better Canada to be?"

Reformers have done this over the last five years, mainly in the west and parts of Ontario. We intend to continue to do this in the west, throughout Ontario, in Quebec, the north and Atlantic Canada. We have found that if we ask these questions and listen carefully to the responses Canadians will share their fears, their dreams and their aspirations with us. If we ask them they will answer.

In the dreams and aspirations of individual Canadians and groups of Canadians we will find the substance, the raw material from which to create a composite picture of a new and better Canada of the 21st century.

We have developed shorthand phrases to refer to the distinguishing characteristics of this new Canada, some of which are summarized in our motion. For example, there is the simple phrase "strengthening the economy". In the context of the 21st century this means establishing a truly internationally competitive economy, knowledge based, service oriented, environmentally sustainable, capable of providing good jobs and good incomes for all our citizens.

To get to that destination the new economy of the 21st century requires the implementation of certain public policies: fiscal policies to lower the cost of government, tax policies to pass on the benefits of this reduced cost to taxpayers and encourage job creation, trade policies to eliminate barriers to trade including internal barriers to trade, educational and training policies to produce an internationally competitive workforce.

To get to that destination the new economy of the 21st century may also require constitutional changing: a constitutional requirement to balance government budgets, a strengthening of the federal commerce power and a new division of responsibilities on education and training.

Defining and getting to that new economy of the new Canada is far more than a constitutional exercise but it may have constitutional aspects which cannot be ignored. In this resolution we have used simple phrases like "strengthening our economy" as a heading. The words of the heading may seem trite and familiar but if one understands each of these shorthand phrases to be the tip of an iceberg beneath which lie all the public policies, private initiatives and constitutional changes required to actually bring into being a 21st century economy, then each phrase can be made to stand for something substantive and to fully describe a distinguishing characteristic of a new Canada.

Some will ask what this approach to defining a new Canada offers to Quebecers. The short answer to the question is that it offers Quebecers the same benefits it offers every other Canadian, including the freedom to develop and preserve cultural distinctiveness.

[Translation]

In short, the answer to that question is that this approach offers Quebecers the same advantages as all other Canadian citizens, including the freedom to promote and protect their cultural distinctiveness.

[English]

This approach offers to Quebecers as well as to all other Canadians the new jobs of the new economy, jobs which are more likely to be created and maintained if our bargaining agent in the new free trade world represents a market of 28 million people rather than 8 million.

• (1020)

This approach offers to Quebecers as well as to other Canadians tax relief, not the additional tax bills that will come from establishing a sovereigntist government with national obligations, obligations to Canada, and new international obligations as well.

This approach offers to Quebecers as well as to all other Canadians financially sustainable social services. Properly designed social insurance plans which spread the risks over a