

The Address

Madam Speaker, I would like to make a final clarification on the true nature of the infrastructure program and its economic impact on the provinces and municipalities:

The federal government is championing this program. It pompously announces its absolute leadership in setting up this program.

It is important to recall that the Liberal government did not instigate this program; in fact, it was initiated by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, whose report addressing the renewal of basic local infrastructure was adopted in 1985. In reviewing the documents, we will see how far it goes. It was a project re-evaluated in May 1993 at nearly \$20 billion over five years.

For example, the basic infrastructure renewal needs of the city of Montreal alone are estimated at about \$1.7 billion.

I also wish to remind people that the federal government only pays one third of the total program cost. The provinces pay one third, as do the municipalities.

Madam Speaker, the federal government has not yet demonstrated, I remind you, that the money it uses will all be new funds, nor has it demonstrated that it will not use spending cuts in social programs and transfer payments to free up the new money needed to pursue its program.

The 33 per cent that the federal government invests is likely to be much less when the above-mentioned issues are taken into account.

By intervening in provincial jurisdiction, the federal government is unbalancing the municipalities' three-year capital works plans. To free up the money needed to start work in the next two years, will the municipalities have to draw on funds that were to be spent in later years, in 1996, 1997 or 1998?

In so doing, they will face chronic underfunding for future projects on later agendas, thus creating a sort of dependence that will of course suit any centralizing government.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to show in my first speech in the House one of the wrongs of federalism as traditionally practised by Liberal governments. Here is where the second part of the mandate we sought and received from Quebecers comes in, namely promotion of Quebec sovereignty.

In this statement on Canada's infrastructure program, I wanted to show the indescribable administrative mess we are living in as Canadians. This example in just one field of government activity is matched in almost all other areas. Duplication and infringement have become the rule and no longer the exception.

English Canada recognizes the primacy of the federal government over the provincial governments and that is no doubt why this same English Canada is less sensitive to federal infringement in provincial jurisdiction.

• (1635)

We are a long way from the spirit of equality, balance and mutual respect which characterized the Constitution in 1867. Although it respects the will of its partners, Quebec must not pursue that route.

In my opinion, Canadian federalism has become a model of administrative inefficiency, an inefficiency which undermines the system and severely affects the groups which should be served.

Political systems are tools used by communities to co-ordinate their actions. There is no doubt in my mind that we have to adopt a new regime if we want to get out of this situation.

And this is why the Bloc Quebecois will, during the next referendum, ask Quebecers to patriate its tools by proclaiming its sovereignty.

In the last week, we have heard a lot about the famous red book—probably as much as the Chinese people heard about Mao's red book during the cultural revolution—but I want to remind the government that people in Quebec voted overwhelmingly in support of the Bloc Quebecois and not the Liberal government's red book and, as such, gave their federal representatives the very clear mandate which we had sought, that is to defend Quebec's interests and promote its sovereignty.

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Madam Speaker, I can see from the speech the hon. member for Ahuntsic just made that he understands full well what the infrastructure program put forward by the federal government is all about. First of all, we have asked and we continue to ask that the money the federal government wants to spend be directly sent to Quebec. Hence, the provincial and municipal governments in Quebec would be able to effectively and responsibly manage this money according to their priorities. Maybe then there will be some money left for the real infrastructure needs of Quebec.

Again, the federal government is directly impinging on a jurisdiction of which it has no knowledge and on which it has no right, since, according to the Canadian Constitution, the federal government has no right over municipal affairs. But now, in a roundabout way, it will succeed in meddling directly in municipal affairs. For the first time in Canadian history, the federal government will directly impinge on municipal affairs. It is a shame, but the federal government keeps doing it.

The Liberal government at that time was the most centralist of all federal governments in Canada's history, and again, with this policy, this program, it will manage to stick its nose in the