

The Address

this is possible because Canada existed. Those are the facts!

When I see people in this House ignore those one million francophones outside Quebec, and when I hear people over there saying they are as good as dead, except for the death certificate, I think they should go and visit some of the counties in New Brunswick and see the Acadians who were deported and came back, and who will never lose their language because they believe Canada is the answer.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: It is our duty to keep this country together. Thanks to this country, we are proud to be francophones, and thanks to this country, we are where we are today. Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that if the Prime Minister acts now, he will have our co-operation, because in my many trips across the country, I have found a fantastic reservoir of good will and tolerance.

[English]

There are some people who complain about the corn flakes boxes. There are some people like that. If they do not like it, they should turn the box around or pretend to read it if they do not want to talk to their wives during breakfast.

We have to fight for this country. We are unique. Very soon in Europe, everybody will speak three languages.

[Translation]

Mr. Rocard, the French Prime Minister, said in an interview with *Le Devoir* not long ago that he was looking for ways to ensure that every European spoke at least three languages. This means that if you are French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese, you would have to learn either English or German, or a germanic language, and of course the opposite would apply to people who speak English, Danish or German. Here, we already have two languages.

• (1110)

I think that pretty soon, it will be possible for every Canadian in this country who graduates from university to speak not just two but three languages. This would mean that we as North Americans would be able to compete, to travel throughout the world and show that

we are just as good as the Europeans, especially with the added benefit of two official languages. This is a heritage our country may be proud of.

Hundreds of thousands of young anglophone Canadians will learn French today because they know we have two official languages, and that because we have two languages, we are different. This is one of the most important things that differentiate us from Americans.

I therefore urge the Prime Minister to act quickly, because Canada is far too great and noble a country to be allowed to fall apart. All of us are going to work on this together, and Canada will survive!

[English]

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Chrétien: I move, seconded by the hon. member for Hamilton East, that the following be added to the address:

This House regrets to inform Your Excellency that your government is incapable of providing leadership and direction in the constitutional and economic affairs of the nation, and that it has lost the confidence of this House and of the Canadian people.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. It is my understanding that since 1957, the Leader of the Official Opposition has always been the first speaker following the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I believe that on each and every one of those occasions, with the exception of 1989, the right hon. Prime Minister was the individual who would take his place and respond on behalf of the government.

As I stated, I think the exception was in 1989 when the right hon. Prime Minister, either for lacking courage or political will, did not—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond rises on an alleged point of order. I think the comments of the hon. member are observations. Of course, there is no order binding the government, or for that matter other members, in a particular order that ministers will respond to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker, may I just take a moment to comment because I think it is very important as we begin this debate?