

The Address

Speaking Parliamentarians. I believe we did sit, full of hope, as Conservatives, with this difference that we saw the light.

I can assure you that one party or the other, it amounts to the same thing. In what situation were the Liberals, in 1984? They were rejected by the entire Canadian population, from Halifax to Vancouver. Why was that? Because they had put Canada almost \$200 billion into debt. They had completely given up the management of the country. They were voted out of office. What did the Conservatives do? We chose to believe. I did, I believed in the "beau risque", in Quebec joining the Confederation enthusiastically and with dignity. I too believed in that "beau risque". I came to this place and, together with capable people like the present Leader of the Opposition, we did our best to play fair.

What happened under the Conservative government from 1984 to 1993? The national debt grew from \$200 billion to \$400 billion, has now reached \$500 billion. There were constitutional issues then and there are still constitutional issues today. There was overlapping and there are still problems in that area.

Now, the same people who were voted out of office in 1984—the government leader and the minister who spoke earlier—are back. Why were they voted out? Because they did not know how to manage the country, they had put it into debt. How will the Liberal Party be remembered in the history of Canada? It will be remembered as the party that ruined Canada, and you all bear that responsibility when you are elected under the Liberal banner. Let us not forget that this is the party that voted the Clark government out of office saying: "With us, there will be no tax increases." Joe Clark had promised to bring the deficit down from \$13 billion to \$10 billion. Yet the Liberals allowed it to rise to \$38 billion. They are the first to blame. The Conservatives too tried to get the deficit under control. They too failed.

The bottom line is that the problem rests not with the party in office, but with the system. That is what we want to work on.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[English]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I direct this question to my colleague from Richelieu.

I listened attentively to his comments and particularly to the comments of his leader. I listened attentively, as well, to the comments from the government benches. It was interesting that all these comments had a lot to say about the wallet and very little to say about the heart.

• (1815)

I have spent all my adult life with this debate in Quebec and Quebec's place in Confederation. We are going to be revisiting it again, but I can assure my hon. colleague that he will be getting an honest debate and whatever happens, win, lose or draw, we

are going to be neighbours. At least he will have an honest debate. He will get it from us and I hope from the government.

In your comments you mentioned that Montreal would be a natural site for the NAFTA environmental secretariat. Could you tell me the names of the other Canadian cities that are in the running and why you think Montreal is the favoured city?

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind the hon. members that they must address their questions to the Chair. The hon. member for Richelieu has the floor.

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the last question: it was during the conference on the ozone layer, which was held in Montreal under the chairmanship of the mayor of that city. It was agreed then that, if a secretariat was to be established, it would be in Montreal where the international conference was being held. It is in that sense that a commitment was made and it is in that sense that I was reminding the government of that commitment. I was surprised to see the Deputy Prime Minister trying to attract this centre in her own riding, through a study done by a private business and a small contract awarded to someone. This is commonly known as patronage and it is in that sense that I raised this issue.

Earlier you said that we have also been talking for 30 years about debates and the presence of the province of Quebec. We agree with you that a debate must take place and we are convinced that, given their position, the new members of the Reform Party will make a great contribution to this debate. We want to have this debate precisely to arrive at some form of mutual respect between the two founding nations of this country, as well a new economic union based on the existence of two sovereign States.

[English]

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member for Richelieu with reference to one of his remarks. In his enthusiasm he may not have meant what he said but he indicated that all the Reform members were in attendance at the Governor General's last night. Possibly the hon. member would like to refer to that remark and correct it for *Hansard*.

[Translation]

Mr. Plamondon: Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, we are also former Conservative members, if my memory does not fail me.

The hon. member will know that I have never said that I would not go to the Governor General's. I really think that it was an excessive expenditure. In a time of recession, the cocktail party we had at the House, after the Throne Speech, was sufficient. I think that we are exaggerating when, in a year of recession, we spend another \$100 a head for such a party, while the poor are having a rough time. That is why I said that. Nonetheless, I