

• (1720)

In order that there be no misunderstanding, I would like the general population to know what our leader has said and what the congress of the Liberal Party of Canada Quebec section had to say this past weekend in Sherbrooke:

Whereas the Liberal Party of Canada recognizes the urgent necessity of profoundly reforming Canada's political and economic structure in order to give the country the dynamism, flexibility and modernism required to successfully face the demands and challenges of the 21st century; (and) whereas the members of the Liberal party of Canada firmly believe that the best option for Quebec remains the adherence to a reformed Canadian federation.

It presents a clear progressive and substantial constitutional reform plan, the fundamental elements of which I would like to lay out for you in terms of national unity and I would call it "our blueprint for Canada".

The first major point is that we reaffirm our faith in a profoundly reformed federal regime as the most capable system of ensuring economic growth, social justice, respect for the principle of linguistic duality, the protection and promotion of the French language and culture, enrichment of multiculturalism as well as respect for minority rights as much within Quebec as in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Chrétien spoke eloquently about respect for francophones outside Quebec and respect for anglophones inside Quebec, and he alluded to the barbecue, the Bloc Québécois under Mr. Bouchard, and the fact that he now is coming around to what Mr. Chrétien said two and a half years ago about the fact that Bill 178 was a totally unnecessary bill. One does not protect French by building a sense of belonging and a sense of participation on the backs or by diminishing other people.

The second point we made was that in the constitutional debate, the joint committee, in its final report, integrate in a non-exclusive manner the following reform elements, and I read them as quickly as I can:

[Translation]

(a) to define major national and international objectives that are desirable for the progress of Canada as a whole and respond to the common goals of Canadian citizens, such as being internationally competitive and improving the quality of the environment and the social well-being of our citizens;

The Address

Some of the reforms.

[English]

A second point here is that a new division of powers taking into consideration: amongst others (1) the identification of the common objectives of the Canadian totality, (2) the determination of the level of government most capable of adequately responding to the needs of the population according to the well-being of the latter, and (3) the elimination, as completely as possible, of the overlapping and splitting of programs and services within the scope of shared spheres of activity, having recourse, if necessary to asymmetrical agreements;

[Translation]

The Third point is as follows:

(c) incorporation in the Constitution of the distinct character of Quebec, by guaranteeing, for instance:

(i) the powers Quebec needs to protect and promote French language and culture within its territory, while respecting recognized rights and freedoms;

[English]

I have two more I would like to do, if I may.

[Translation]

Also:

(ii) in a reformed and elected Senate, the inclusion of the double majority rule for votes on bills and government decisions that may affect the status, protection and promotion of the French language;

(iii) a veto right; [and]

(v) the provinces' right to withdraw, with full compensation, from any federal shared costs programs in exclusively provincial jurisdictions, provided that they establish a program which is compatible with the objectives of the national program;

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Unless I have unanimous consent, I will have to interrupt the hon. member. We now have five minutes for questions and comments. The hon. member for Lotbinière.

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments by the hon. member for Mount Royal. I wanted to ask a question earlier but I arrived just as the previous speaker was finishing his speech. In the circumstances, I would appreciate the hon. member's comments, since she seemed to be showing full support for what the other member was saying, which was that when Mr. Trudeau patriated the Constitution in 1982, he said that in any case, the Quebec government did not want to sign. He seemed to