

The Address

Therefore, I would urge the premier of Quebec and those in this House who may know him to say: "Take a look at that sign law and do not justify it by saying that they did terrible things in Manitoba 100 years ago". Two wrongs do not make a right.

We as Canadians, whether we are from Quebec, the west, Atlantic Canada or Ontario have to be prepared not only to talk but to listen and to try to understand. Then we can build this country as we want it to be.

[Translation]

Mr. Nic Leblanc (Longueuil): Mr. Speaker, the emphasis seems to be on national unity these days and some say that, without it, we will not be able to meet the economic challenge.

But we know full well that the present economic krach is the made-to-measure creation of this government. It is not because Canada has been divided for the past twenty years that the federal deficit grows by at least \$20 or \$30 billion a year.

The cumulative debt in Canada has reached \$400 billion and we are under the impression that Canada is not doing well because it is divided. Canada is not doing well precisely because there are eleven political powers operating in this country, eleven powers at odds with one another and holding elections at different times, which leads to confrontation and inconsistency. It also goes to show that Canada is not financially viable.

Let us stop kidding ourselves and start decentralizing. We have to give more powers to the regions, thereby making them sovereign. It is a must. What we want, in fact, is for Quebec to be the first to become sovereign. We do not want this country to be destroyed, but to be saved economically speaking. A flashy speech from the Throne like this one will do little for the economy of this country. Far from it.

The first thing to do is to decentralize and give more powers to the regions, thereby granting them sovereignty. Only then can we hope to see the economic situation improve.

[English]

Mr. McCreath: Mr. Speaker, my time is brief. I will talk quickly. Quite simply, the hon. member who just spoke ran under the banner of the Progressive Conservative Party and under the leadership of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney who was then and is now the best hope for providing leadership that will reunify this country and

recreate the Confederation of tomorrow that we all look forward to.

• (1540)

I respect my hon. friend for his views, but you do not build strength by tearing things apart. You build strength by staying at the table, by slugging it out, by having your say and listening to what the other person says and trying to work together to make it all come together. At a time when Europe is coming together, where is the logic in Canada falling apart?

Quite simply, there is no logic in that. There is no logic in the policy of my hon. friend's parliamentary group, or that of the Reform Party which has the same aspirations.

I say that members of Parliament came here to work for Canada, to have Canada grow, become strong and become unified.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to a matter that affects us all, and this reminds me of that time back in 1981-82, and even before, when I was involved in the debate in this House on a new Constitution with a Charter of Rights. I found this a very difficult time because as you know, Mr. Speaker, I was unable to support measures that would reduce or quantify my rights or add a notwithstanding clause restricting the application of that legislation. I therefore voted against my leader's constitutional proposal—

Mr. Prud'homme: Trudeau never forgave you!

Mr. Gauthier: They didn't forgive me but I think they understood.

Mr. Prud'homme: Oh, they never will!

Mr. Gauthier: Today, Mr. Speaker, Canada is again facing a time of tremendous tension, a crisis partly due to the demise of the Meech Lake constitutional proposal and partly to what I see as a lack of leadership and vision on the part of the federal government and politicians generally.

Mr. Prud'homme: Especially in Newfoundland!

Mr. Gauthier: The advent of free trade, the deregulation policy, privatization, the weakening of agencies that represent our national identity such as the CBC, VIA Rail, Air Canada and Petro-Canada all of this, Mr. Speaker, acted as a catalyst for the present crisis. Because the government has been slow to resolve this conflict, a number of divergent—not marginal because