

*The Address—Right. Hon. Brian Mulroney*

Last week, I conveyed congratulations to the Hon. J. W. Pickersgill on his important role 40 years ago in making Newfoundland a part of Canada. He contributed significantly to this historic result and performed, I thought, a major act of nation building by an individual whose entire life has been a commitment to Canada and to our national unit. I think he has had a most distinguished career in Canada and has been a pillar of the Liberal Party over four decades. As principal secretary, I think Clerk of the Privy Council, senior adviser, Member of Parliament and senior cabinet Minister, Mr. Pickersgill has a unique understanding of constitutional negotiations, of their import and their impact, and a sensitive appreciation of the nuances of Canadian federalism.

Jack Pickersgill is now a man approaching 84 years of age. He has no more political battles to win. He has no more mountains to climb. It was instructive, therefore, to re-read what Mr. Pickersgill said in his analysis of the Meech Lake Accord. "On the eve of that meeting," he wrote, "I would not have given the First Ministers one chance in 10 of success. I was excited and delighted when they reached accord. Once I read the document," Mr. Pickersgill said, "I was satisfied it met the requirements of Quebec without in any way reducing the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. I was delighted by the generous and united reception of the miracle of Meech Lake by all parties in Parliament."

He concluded by saying, "If we allow this opportunity to pass, my guess is that it will probably not arise again for another generation and never again on such reasonable terms."

Great sadness for nations and people and families alike arise from opportunities lost. There is now an opportunity for Canada within our reach, one that shall, according to one of Canada's most distinguished sons, not arise again on such reasonable terms.

So what shall Manitobans and New Brunswickers do? Legislators representing 93 per cent of Canadians have already endorsed the Meech Lake Accord. The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the Leader of the New Democratic Party and myself in my capacity as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party have all endorsed the Accord. What shall Manitobans and New Brunswickers do? Shall they complete the process and bind the nation strongly together, or wait for a better

deal that may never come while constitutional paralysis slowly envelopes the nation?

Canadians do not consider the Meech Lake Accord to be the last word in our constitutional evolution. Rather, they have in mind a variety of next steps which are pressing and which require discussion. If this discussion is to become possible, whether on the very important questions of Senate reform, aboriginal and linguistic rights, roles and responsibilities in relation to the fishery, and strengthening of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this can all come to pass once the Meech Lake Accord is fully ratified and implemented. Failure to ratify carries with it its own consequences.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, this is a time of extraordinary potential both at home and abroad. As we speak, winds of hope are blowing across Canada.

Confrontation and stereotypes are giving way to new attitudes founded on economic reality. Constructive internationalism is needed, and Canada is certainly prepared to play its part. The government is encouraged by the signs of change in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, by a new emphasis on the forms of democracy in these countries.

We are also genuinely impressed, it must be said, by the creative and daring leadership provided by President Gorbachev. Such a will to improve, to build, and to reach out should not go unanswered. Reform is welcome if it lessens tensions in the world and increases the likelihood of peace. If we attain lasting peace, obviously, that is a wonderful benefit not only for Canada but for the world.

But we must temper our optimism with prudence. The Soviet Union remains a military superpower. It is not a free society as we know the term. Free speech remains a privilege, not a right. Parliamentary democracy as we know it here in our country does not exist, despite the encouraging reforms that we now see thanks to Mr. Gorbachev's vigorous intervention and the push he is giving his country to become a more modern and efficient state. Power still remains the prerogative of a few. That is why we must keep intact our relationships with our allies in NATO and NORAD, our basic relationships with our historic allies, and do our best to sustain our commitment to collective security in Europe and elsewhere. We will always do our part in peacekeeping, whenever the United Nations needs us.