

The Address

number two. It is not bad to be number two in the eyes of the rest of the world and to be known as a country to which people would love to come and in which people feel honoured to be a citizen participating in the growth and development.

I just wish that were the way we could go about establishing this country. If you look for a way in which we could establish some process and procedures to meet the discomfort and lack of assurance that we are going to be one country, that Quebec and Canada are going to live together, then we have to look to our leader Mr. Chrétien, who has come forward with some really concrete and positive suggestions for action now.

I could say that it is rather sad, but I would say that it is not so sad but a happy coincidence that this government has taken the ideas that Mr. Chrétien put forward and paraphrased them, you could say, they copycat them. I will not say plagiarize, but I will say that if you look at the throne speech, you will see some very interesting remarks taken almost totally from Mr. Chrétien's presentation.

First of all, our leader called for a Canadian round. What did this wonderful Speech from the Throne say? It said it will be a Canadian round.

Second, Mr. Chrétien proposed a joint parliamentary committee to hold nation-wide hearings on a set of constitutional principles. It just turned that around a bit and in this government's Speech from the Throne, it was announced that there will be a committee starting some time in September—just a delay from June, which Mr. Chrétien called for—and that a decision would be taken by this government after that committee makes its report.

It would suggest new legislation either for a referendum or for a constituent assembly. If Mr. Chrétien suggested that the final proposition be submitted to Canadians in a national referendum, I would say that this is close to becoming a copycat approach.

I do not care that it is a copycat approach. I can tell you that—our Leader said this best—if you want to copy what he has done, please go right ahead and do it. We are prepared in the interests of Canada, far beyond the

interest of a single political party, to enable the mechanisms that can help this country come together.

We have so little on which we differ that we have got to find the Canadian way and accommodate.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Finestone: Our Leader asked the government to consider proposals and not delay the procedures until next February. He presented a whole process for a reform package.

He started by presenting a fundamental concept in November 1990 to the Bélanger-Campeau commission and then those were reiterated a framework of nine principles for constitutional reform on April 21 in a very wonderful speech in Montreal.

He shared that openly with the public and in meetings with the new minister of constitutional affairs. This party and our leader, who is more interested in the evolution of Canada than in partisan politics, want to maintain Canada coast to coast, including Quebec and its particularity. Mr. Chrétien went on to lay out in a more formalistic manner using the Quebec federal Liberal Party Congress, the *colloque* that we had in Sherbrooke this week, a whole proposal for Quebec happiness, which is a must for Canadian unity.

[*Translation*]

Canadian unity, of which Quebec's happiness is a necessary element.

[*English*]

I would suggest that this constitutional proposal is solid. It is an excellent reference point for a constitutional position which could be placed before the people. Then there would be something concrete on which reaction could take place, whether by provincial governments, interested parties or the ordinary men and women of Canada. From there we could go on to step three, which would be an amended principle placed before the people in a national referendum. I think that the process laid out by our leader in response to Canadian unity—far before this response to the throne speech—is a responsible action by the only leader who can truly bring Canada together in the future.