

The Address

Even Canadians from the Maritimes with their great traditions and secular experience of closeness to nature are a great lesson for us in other parts of the country.

Thus, that is very simple and that is why I have suggested the creation of a national force of Canadian youth.

[English]

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by complimenting my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore and saying that I am appalled that he has not been to the maritimes. I hope that he will go there very soon. We will be delighted—

An hon. member: He did not say that.

Ms. Clancy: He did not say that. I am sorry I thought he said he had not been to the maritimes.

Mr. Boyer: My mother was born there.

Ms. Clancy: That is your mother, Patrick.

Mr. Boyer: I have been to Nova Scotia.

Ms. Clancy: Oh, I misunderstood.

An hon. member: Invite him to come again.

Ms. Clancy: That is fine. We would be delighted to have you visit again and share our joint feelings of Canadianism.

When I began thinking about what I was going to say here this afternoon, it was impossible not to think back to the summer of 1990, the summer of our discontent.

It was the summer that saw the failure of Meech Lake, the forcing of our native peoples to the barricades, the looming recession and the terrible polarization that began among Canadians.

Here we are, the most favoured country on earth that has been blessed by God and lent to us privileged few who have the fortune to call ourselves Canadians. We have been and continue to be in great danger of spoiling our heritage and ruining our future.

Today, nearly a year after the summer of 1990 began, we are still a nation in distress. We are perhaps a nation with an illness of the heart. We are a people filled with fear and a nation no longer willing to trust. We are a

nation that is frustrated and angry. It is a terrible picture, and it is one that must be changed.

When it comes to the future of Canada, it is absolutely clear to all of us that we must put aside our differences as politicians. We must work together on all sides of this Chamber to ensure that we are not the parliamentarians who preside over the demise of Canada.

Now and again, I have been accused of being partisan. I accept that description, and I accept it with pride. Parliament is no place for women and men who are not passionate in their beliefs and who do not fight fiercely for their policies and principles.

Partisanship has been getting a bit of a bad name, and we, in this Chamber are all to blame to some degree for that. Partisanship is an honourable tradition in this House, as it is an honourable tradition in all the democracies of the world.

All Canadians are, indeed, better off because that tradition exists and because it is the very heart of our democracy. There are certain times—God knows that this is one of them—that this tradition must give way to a higher need.

In times of national peril, we must all remember that Liberals, New Democrats, Conservatives, Reformers or Independents are first, foremost and always Canadians.

[Translation]

We may be French Canadians, English Canadians, Chinese Canadians or Italian Canadians, but today, tomorrow and forever we are first and foremost Canadians.

[English]

It is our job to convince the people of Canada that we are a constituent assembly, that we represent ordinary Canadians and that, most important, we—every one of us in this Chamber—are responsible to ordinary Canadians. We are responsive to their concerns.

One of the privileges of being a member of Parliament is that it takes you out of your own province and to different parts of the country. It does not matter where I have been in the past year, whether I was in Winnipeg, Toronto, in my own maritimes or in the far west. I heard the same thing from Canadians.