

*The Budget*

companies go bankrupt as a result of the minimum tax levied against them by Washington.

I noticed with interest last month's increase in the number of bankruptcies in Canada over the previous month, in a country where we have no minimum corporate tax, but with the coming recession we have had 30 per cent more bankruptcies than in the past.

Of course the new approach I am suggesting to the federal government calls for courage, the kind of courage which will restore voters' confidence in federalism. Talking about federalism and courage, I should like to refer briefly to the Meech Lake Accord if only because it did take a certain amount of courage on the part of the government to support Meech Lake, and I commend them for that. It did take some courage from all three political parties here in the House—the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party—to vote in favour of the Meech Lake Accord.

We understand René Lévesque's message that it was worth the risk.

When I quoted René Lévesque, you said: Good heavens, quoting a separatist during a constitutional crisis! I don't see it that way. Let me quote what Mr. Lévesque said in September 1984. I think it sounds very brave and very relevant today. He said: "If federalism could be made to work better than it does, if it could be improved, wouldn't this stifle our basic option and put sovereignty on the backburner? In any case, there is an element of risk. But it is an attractive one, and in any case we cannot afford not to take that risk".

In today's situation, some provinces are not prepared to take that risk, including Newfoundland, and perhaps New Brunswick and Manitoba.

I believe that Canadians must once again find the courage to set aside partisan considerations and their fear of taking this risk. We must support Meech Lake.

• (1610)

As for me, as the member for Chambly, I intend to support Meech Lake, which is the best way, I think, to regain confidence in federalism. I intend to stand up for Quebec, but within the Canadian confederation. I intend to support the Meech Lake Accord and to oppose the GST as well as the new budget tabled by the Minister of

Finance. This is the very best way I have found to serve my constituents.

On February 12, the constituents in Chambly sent a very clear message to this House, in Ottawa, which I hope my colleagues on the other side have understood. My constituents are calling for change on the tax issue, including the GST, and on the budget very recently introduced by the Minister of Finance.

And finally, I intend to continue to oppose any action by the federal government to transfer its obligations to the provinces and to make them pay for its blunders. I will oppose that kind of action today and I will oppose it as long as I will sit in the House of Commons. But that will not prevent me from congratulating the government on its good moves. And when the best interests of Quebec are threatened, I will be the first to criticize the government.

[English]

For my English-speaking friends, I would just like to say that it is with great honour that I come here elected as the first NDP Member of Parliament from the Province of Quebec and from the riding of Chambly. It is with a great deal of humility and excitement that I come before you, my peers, in order to explain to you that in Quebec we are an intelligent province. We are an intelligent people and we are a tolerant people.

I am an English-speaking Quebecer elected in a riding 90 per cent French. I speak French with an accent. I find that the *chaleur humaine*—once again I actually forget my words in English—but the feelings of belonging and a full feeling of being a Quebecer—as an English-speaking Quebecer, I have that in my province. I am not an oppressed minority. I believe in Quebec. I believe in the Meech Lake Accord and my party believes in the Meech Lake Accord.

I believe that in Parliament all three parties have distinguished themselves when it came to the crunch and the moment to vote, which was a most important moment here in Parliament, by putting aside the partisan question, the fear of the unknown, and the false fears, and we said: "The minimum conditions of Quebec must be met. Quebec is important for the rest of Canada. We want Quebec integrated in the Constitution." I am proud