

### Supply

Canadian federalism, what it has been for years, and what it will be in the future with our government. But before I go on, let me say that the Bloc Québécois does not seem to be following a program of its own but, rather, a program dictated by the Quebec National Assembly.

Take, for example, the motion tabled three or four weeks ago to support the claims made by the Quebec Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. That motion was essentially related to three claims submitted to the federal government by the Quebec government. There again, I had the opportunity to participate in the debate on the motion and show this House to what extent Bloc members are biased and do not want the federal system to work.

But I digress. On the one hand, you have the extremist doctrine of the Bloc Québécois, which says that, if you look at the evolution of the federal system since 1960, you will see that we are headed for an extremely centralizing system which will soon leave very little power, if any, to the provinces. Yet, since our Liberal government came to office, there have been striking examples showing that federalism can evolve in such a way that the wishes of all the governments involved, both federal and provincial ones, can be respected.

Our federal system compares favourably with other federations in the world. For example, consumer spending by the provincial administrations is 3.5 times higher than for the federal government. That says a lot about whether we are a centralized or a decentralized federation. It indicates that the Canadian federation is in fact more decentralized than that of many other countries, including Switzerland, Germany, Australia and the United States.

As regards the fact that the Canadian federation is a model of decentralization, allow me to quote a statement made in 1977, at the University of Edinburgh, by a famous person. That person agrees with me and this government, since he clearly said that the Canadian federation is decentralized. The comment, made in English, was as follows:

[English]

And because rather often in Canada we tend to talk of the abusive centralized powers of Ottawa we tend to forget that in reality Canada is highly decentralized.

[Translation]

That was reported in the *Globe and Mail* of May 9, 1977, and the words came from none other than Quebec's Premier, Jacques Parizeau, who maintained that Canada was a model of decentralization. There you have an excellent example of double standards. You have an example that shows clearly that these people can say one thing abroad, and quite another when addressing Quebecers, when they are concerned about their own interests and their own objectives.

Besides, one only has to think of Mr. Parizeau's speech to the permanent council of French-speaking countries, on his last visit to Paris. When you listen to that speech, and consider Mr. Parizeau's comparisons of Quebec, you are not proud to be a Quebecer. Quebecers are greater than that, they are energetic, they can take their place in Canada, and they will take their place internationally. Mr. Parizeau's speech on the international scene does not reflect this energy. As a Quebecer, I am upset by such speeches.

• (1520)

You know that members opposite talk about centralizing federalism. At the beginning of my speech, I said I would have the opportunity to review a number of issues which clearly show that our federation is an extremely decentralized federation. Take for instance the immigration issue. The immigration agreement is a striking example of good co-operation between Quebec and Ottawa, where the province of Quebec was given more power to select immigrants.

Some argue that it does not work, but I could give you other examples, including the status of some provinces among French speaking countries. Did the province of Quebec or did New Brunswick belong at the Francophonie table? No. The federal government reached an agreement with both provinces so that these provincial governments would be considered guests among the French speaking countries and be able to fully take part in the events. This is another remarkable example of a flexible federation, but mostly of a respectful one.

The members opposite are turning a deaf ear, saying that it does not work. Let me give you some more examples. Direct collection of the GST is another good example of federal-provincial co-operation, which has an extremely positive impact on the population and makes the collection of that tax easier. This is another striking example of decentralization.

Members opposite refuse to hear anything positive and simply say that federation is not working. However, we could give them many more examples which would all indicate that our federation is flexible. They do not want to understand anything, so let us give them more examples. The St. Lawrence 2000 Agreement was signed with the province of Quebec. My colleagues opposite are leaving the House or making fun of what I say, mostly because the truth hurts. When you give them examples, they refuse to listen and leave the House. The St. Lawrence 2000 Agreement is an outstanding example of co-operation between Quebec and Ottawa. This extremely positive agreement was signed so that the St. Lawrence could get cleaned up. It is an agreement that eliminates overlap and that is beneficial to the people of Canada.

And that is not all. Some will say that is not enough. The Canada-Quebec Infrastructure Program. Is there another example of a program that has been implemented in record time like this one has? It took only four or five months to put this program in place. This program, involving the three levels of govern-