

A Strong, Proud and Organized Right

(Joanne Marcotte's Opening Speech at the first Réseau Liberté-Québec Event on October 23, 2010)

On behalf of the founding members of Réseau Liberté-Québec, I'd like to welcome you to this history-making event, but I would especially, **especially** like to thank all of you, as well as our guest speakers and panellists, for the trust you have placed in us.

Today, **you** are living proof that there actually is a **strong, proud and organized** right in Quebec...and borrowing, if I may, these words from Macleans journalist Martin Patriquin, for which he has been gaining fame lately, "**Today, we are going to show that we can be loud, proud and organized.**"

Even though this day is, for some of us, the start of something new, I would like to pay tribute to those who have come before us and who, **fortunately**, make it possible for the "Quebec right wing" to become increasingly **resolute, resilient, credible** and hang-up free.

I'm talking about Jean-Luc Migué, for instance, who was one of the first to carry the torch of liberal thinking in Quebec. One of **the first**, if not **the first**, to question the Quebec Model. An internationally renowned expert known for his contribution to the development of the Public Choice School and now emeritus professor at the École nationale d'administration publique. He is here with us today.

I'm talking about the man who founded the Montreal Economic Institute, Michel Kelly-Gagnon, who is also here today. And when we bring up resilience, we can't not mention the Martin Masse & Gilles Guénette duo, which has been doing an exceptional job on "Le Québécois Libre" Web magazine for a very long time now.

A special mention to the **Fraser Institute** and **Manning Center**, whose representatives are here with us today. I recommend you visit their stands at lunch time and get to know their work.

Let me also pay tribute to the men and women of Quebec who are generous enough to defend, **in the political arena**, the values of freedom and individual responsibility, the importance that there be free competition and free choice, as

well as the absolute necessity for smaller government and less economic interventionism...

Thank you for defending Western values, that is **freedom of the press, the separation of Church and State and gender equality**. There are such people here in this room and you know who they are. Thank you for being here today.

A very special mention to Mario Dumont, who has spent several years increasing public awareness in Quebec of the adverse effects of debt overhang. Mario, we wish you all the best in all of your future endeavours. Thank you, Mario, wherever you may be.

Finally, a brief but kind word to all the media that, more than ever, accept to publish and thus introduce and broadcast the voice of a responsible and humanistic fiscal right. It seems we are being spoiled today... Thank you for being here.

In this very room, today, we are **making history!** Citizens from all over Quebec – academics, columnists, bloggers, think tanks, sovereignists and federalists alike, politicians and former politicians, and all others who define themselves as “anything but a politician”...are gathered here and speaking up: Quebec deserves better, **Quebecers** deserve better.

It is time for us to demand more of ourselves and less of our governments.

I do not need to remind you of our goal, nor do I need to set it apart from that of other political parties, be they existing ones...**or hypothetical ones**. I think everyone here now understands that the Réseau Liberté-Québec is a **movement** that **is not** meant to turn into a political party.

Its goal? For networks to be created not among public figures, but among citizens.

Its approach? Grassroots or bottom-up rather than top-down.

Its plan? Introduce a **demand** for reforms instead of working on a vote-winning political **agenda**.

Because aside from organized groups that have been taking advantage of them, **no one** in their right mind would ever **ask** for astronomical sums to be squandered on wall-to-wall universal social programs that just create waiting lists... **Other than to buy votes!**

No one in their right mind can understand why the Quebec Government is still so interventionist and subsidizing today. **Other than to buy votes...** or finance a political party...

And besides those who profit from it, no one can accept that the Quebec population be kept in the dark about the construction industry or that Quebec be ruled in part by powerful union and business lobbies.

And then...there's no one, **no one** in Quebec who can understand why it takes so many reports, forums, consultations and summits **to end up where?** ...More reports, more consultations, more summits...and even more delays in responding to the priorities of all Quebecers.

In education, after 10 years of reforms, we've finally understood that there wasn't much to be understood.

In the health system, after **decades of stubbornly wanting** to keep the monopoly on financing as well as providing healthcare, we still have a hard time making others understand that solutions **do exist**, that they are widespread elsewhere in the world, **and that they do work...**without the waiting lists!

We do not, no we do not, have the governments that we deserve. This Quebec Model, this social democracy with a Quebec flavour that keeps making promises but never delivers, is the product of an outdated vote-seeking political culture, a culture of dependence and free access...and of complete indifference to tomorrow's taxpayer.

I would even add that this Quebec Model, **which we mask with nice rhetoric** and good intentions, **is totally indifferent to the population** we have deceived, to young people dropping out of school and to the sick who are waiting for care.

And so we tell ourselves that if we want a new generation of politicians who will set things straight, **we'll have to voice a different demand.** We'll have to speak up loud and clear with the voice of reason, and this, without silencing the voice of compassion that speaks to the more vulnerable among us.

Finally, and more importantly,

We'll have to commit ourselves to being coherent. In fact, it will be our duty to be coherent.

Speaking of coherence, we were told there might be a group demonstrating just outside the hotel today. They call themselves “Alternative socialiste”, the socialist alternative. Make no mistake! **Those people are perfectly coherent** and they are right in fearing us, **for**

The enemy of socialism and servitude is well and truly the free and responsible individual.

A few days ago, a journalist was asking me, “But don’t you find that the right is a tougher sell? It’s not very sexy after all...” A somewhat understandable question coming from a journalist. All things considered, packaging, image and parliamentary jousting...this is what is fascinating, exciting and appealing to the media...**and this is what sells copies.**

And so I replied, “Let me tell you what I do not find appealing.”

I do not find appealing the lowering of standards brought about by the education reform.

I do not find appealing the idea that we must wait **20 hours and 13 minutes** in the ER **either**...

Quebec – the 5th most indebted state, Quebec and its government that’s dependent on Canada’s equalization program. **Not appealing.**

No! What would be appealing **are results** rather than promises.

What appeals to us **is truth and reality** rather than dreams and illusions.

Substance rather than packaging.

Integrity, honesty and transparency rather than the good old vote-seeking reflex.

Finally, what **would** be appealing, let’s fantasize a bit, is **leadership based on convictions** rather than on opportunism and soft consensus.

The values that we cherish are not out of style – work, family...effort, excellence and self-improvement...compassion...the protection of our heritage, **respect for our history and common sense.**

And so coming back to our socialist friends, the left-wing lobbies, the business and union corporatism, and to all of those who still can’t see that a significant shift is

needed, and coming back to those who are still scared of words or who refuse to call things as they are, let me tell you **that you're not done demonstrating**.

Whether you want it or not, the Quebec Model is doomed to crumble under its own weight.

Your house of cards, better yet, **your pyramid system**, simply doesn't hold anymore... Here, like elsewhere, in Greece, in Great Britain, in France, the old social democratic model just isn't maintainable anymore and must be reformed thoroughly.

To those people, then, we'll say this: **you've made us waste enough time**. Your ideology of statism simply doesn't deliver. Your barrage of demands are bringing Quebec to a standstill, **producing drop-outs, exhausting healthcare workers, putting future generations into debt**, pushing investors away and nipping all possibilities of economic development in the bud. **And yes, Quebec is smothered under the weight of state monopolies and a dominating union culture.**

And to the political class, we say this: there **is** a demand for a political class that shows leadership based on convictions and that seeks major reforms in Quebec.

A growing section of the population is asking for **freedom of choice** rather than state mothering, asking for public policies that call for **competition and free market** rather than state monopolies controlled by unions, asking for **an environment that appeals to investors** instead of creating experts in grant applications.

Quebec **has not always** been a haven for social bureaucracy, as some of our guest speakers will mention later, and Quebec **is not** simply a breeding-ground for civil servants either.

And perhaps that one day, writing on the 400 years of Quebec history, we'll say that the last 40 years were nothing more than an unfortunate mistake.

For the first time, supporters of major reforms in Quebec are joining together.

Today we're entering a new a political season in which a new movement rises.

I wish all of you a great day!