

The Address—Mr. Mulroney

of massive manpower retraining program we have urged and which I urge upon the Government again today.

The other day the Prime Minister again said that co-operative federalism was dead. Co-operative federalism is only dead in his mind. A new government will resurrect a genuine kind of federalism on which the nation was built, and I guarantee that there will be an historic degree of co-operation among the provinces, the municipalities and the federal Government to create jobs in the nation.

I notice that the Throne Speech also referred to the words "tolerance" and "civility". I commend the Prime Minister and his colleagues on that choice of language, but I give you, Mr. Speaker, an image. I have said many times how this Party and other Parties view medicare.

[Translation]

I have said and repeated dozens of times that I do not think anyone can make a case against me based on assumptions rather than facts, because I do not treat others that way, and the statement which was straightforward and very clear is as follows:

● (1250)

[English]

"As far as the Conservative Party is concerned, medicare is a sacred trust which we will always preserve".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Let me illustrate what has happened. There has not been an erosion of medicare. What we have had in the last six months has been the erosion of federalism. Let me explain that.

For six months, in one of the ugly contrivances that it has been my displeasure to witness, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) traipsed across this country in a Challenger Jet saying that medicare was going to die if those pernicious Premiers tried to impose user fees. The Premier of New Brunswick, who is one of the most thoughtful, mainstream and able of Canadians, was contemplating it for the simple reason that the Province of New Brunswick was in an extremely grave financial situation. I asked the Minister why she continually abuses, harasses and hectors. Why does she not say that we have a problem? When the federal Government tied its contributions to the GNP and then flattened that GNP growth with a recession, contributions went down in relative terms. Why does the Minister not say: "We have a problem. It is not your fault. It may not be ours. Let's get together in the Canadian tradition. The matter is underfunding. Let's resolve it".

Six months went by. There was blast after blast against every conceivable government and moving object that could be found in this country. Then on Friday, at a Liberal fund-raising dinner in Vancouver, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) said there will be more money for medicare. There was always more money for medicare. That was the problem.

It was the Canadian federal Government that was not living up to its contributions to the provinces in this regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I do not mention that to denigrate or attack anyone. It struck me as being a most unseemly exercise which I witnessed all summer. I heard it in my constituency. I watched it on television. I saw over television the Minister of National Health and Welfare get off a Challenger Jet in western Canada for the purpose of speaking at a meeting that had been organized and funded by her department. It was rent-a-crowd time to protest against this when the problem all along was money. Genuine co-operative federalism requires a spirit of generosity. There must be certain things that are above politics—

[Translation]

—there are certain things in Canada which must be safeguarded against any partisan attack—

[English]

—Medicare has to be one of them at all times.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Another component of industrial progress has to be a major commitment to civilize labour relations in this nation. You do not learn about this program in the PMO. You learn about it from those who have grown up in the area and understand the problems of living, breathing people; those who have worked out problems and have a track record to go with it, not governments that unilaterally bring in legislation to abuse collective agreements *ex post facto* that were signed. That is another way you lose trust and confidence. Organized labour and labour that is unorganized are the key to the development of any industrial strategy in this country. They are told: "After 15 years, we want you along". I am glad the invitation was extended. The hour is late and the challenge is even greater. Civilized industrial relations is another component of our program. These are some ideas that I hope the Government will consider. They are absolutely vital.

[Translation]

Half-baked and band-aid policies, one version here one day, but the day after it is Santa Claus, and the day after, Senator Hébert proposed the creation of a Department of Youth—Is that going to be accepted? The Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) had made that suggestion in August! It is just one more idea stolen from this side of the House. But that is not the way to proceed, for we must admit that there are problems and, as the economists say—

[English]

There are profound structural deficiencies in this economy. One is productivity. One is research and development. One is a tax system that is erratically changed and cripples the entrepreneurial spirit. One is a lack of recognition of the entrepreneurial spirit which governs small businesses, farmers and fishermen. They are the ultimate entrepreneurs, the people