

We will also have a debate in this House on the role of our peacekeeping forces in the former Yugoslavia because, as you know, difficult decisions will have to be made when the time comes to renew mandates, in March and April. And I want the hon. members to have an opportunity to debate the issue.

[English]

I would like members to have the occasion to debate it before, including the members of my party. I would like everyone to speak very frankly. After that we will make a decision knowing what everyone thinks. Particularly for my party it will be unusual because some members may take a position that is not in accordance with what we will eventually decide. However in a democracy we go along with the majority view, the decision of the authorities. I hope the opposition parties will realize this is a new opportunity we are giving to this Parliament so that we can know exactly what members think before, rather than us making the decision. I have been there. It is a terrible job to be in the opposition and I do not want to go back there.

I want members to speak first. Of course they will criticize after that, but we will compare their first speech and the second one.

[Translation]

These reforms are part of our efforts to bring government closer to the people and to restore trust between them.

• (1645)

A government must act in the best interest of all members of society, mainly by promoting job creation, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities.

[English]

The economic policy of this government can be summarized in two words: jobs and growth.

During the course of this debate the President of the Treasury Board will speak about the national infrastructure program. The Minister of Industry will elaborate on government policy with respect to small and medium sized business. The Minister of Human Resources Development will speak about the youth corps and programs to help the transition from school to the workplace. The Minister of Finance has begun a consultative process across Canada before presenting next month's budget. He is committed to getting the economy moving and to creating jobs.

Through a combination of expenditure restraint and economic growth we will succeed in reducing the deficit. We are determined to achieve our goal of 3 per cent of the deficit in relation to the GDP.

We will not throw people out of work simply to be able to say that the deficit has come down. Yesterday the member for Madawaska—Victoria said it very clearly in a way we on this

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side believe it should be said, as do some on the other side too. He used a phrase all of us should keep in mind: the government should be lean but not mean.

In fact our approach to economic policy will be guided by the need to prepare Canadians for the jobs and economic opportunities of the 1990s and the 21st century.

We will invest in Canadians, in training programs and programs to improve literacy and other basic skills.

[Translation]

Our agenda for job creation and economic revival is an ambitious one and, as everyone knows, our resources are limited. A government cannot do everything and, in 1994, it should not try to. This is why we are going to count on partnership to boost growth and job creation.

We will work in partnership with other levels of government to implement our infrastructure program, to reduce internal barriers to trade, to replace the GST and to reform our social programs.

We will work in partnership with the private sector for job training and the youth service corps and for helping—and this is very important—financial institutions to better recognize and better meet the capital needs of small and medium-sized businesses.

[English]

This partnership will also extend to our work in knitting together a stronger social fabric in Canada.

Our number one focus will be the economy, but a strong economy is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end, to better lives for Canadian families, to healthy caring communities, to a decent quality of life. This is the essence of what being a Canadian is all about.

Canada's social security system was created by successive federal governments. A cornerstone of our philosophy is the principle of shared social responsibility. We are extremely proud of the Liberal legacy in social policy. In fact, the father of our Minister of Finance was one of the fathers of this great system. I was here in this House to vote on many of these measures.

• (1650)

We believe that people experiencing economic difficulty must have income support available to them through social assistance. But it is our goal to help people on social assistance who are able to work to be able to move from dependence to full participation in the economic and social life of Canada.

[Translation]

We know that the jobless do not want to be unemployed. Canadians want to earn their living honourably. They want the