

Some initially criticized the Hague Conference. Some initially criticized Canada's participation. But we went, we assumed our responsibilities, we participated actively, and I think that Canada, once again, contributed to an impressive end result.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

While realizing this sustainable development in building a competitive society, we must not, however, abandon compassion as a cornerstone of this Government's social policy. We must never forget that the purpose of ending the crushing burden of debt and of generating new national wealth through competitiveness and trade is not for the pleasure of doing it in the abstract; it is being done to enable us to provide new support for the family, for the elderly, particularly those with lower incomes that is possible in a society that succeeds.

I think this is a fundamental difference between our Party and others in the House of Commons. Only a government that brings about strong economic growth, new wealth and new prosperity, that creates a deeper pool of prosperity, only that kind of government and that kind of country can guarantee new social programs for our citizens.

And so a strong economy ensures the means to support those social benefits which we associate with our very identity as Canadians.

We remain committed to a national child care program. We will address the problems of family violence and sexual abuse against children. The curse of drugs must not go unanswered in our society.

In September of 1986 in Vancouver, I stated that the illegal use of drugs in Canada had become an epidemic which undermines our economic as well as our social fabric. That view, Mr. Speaker, was greeted with some considerable scepticism in some interesting quarters.

Last week, in an editorial entitled "A Tragic Epidemic", Kevin Doyle, the editor of *Maclean's* magazine, described the Canadian reality in these words, and I quote:

In the not so distant past, heroin and cocaine were drugs that destroyed lives in Manhattan, Miami or London. Drug use was only read about in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal or Halifax. Sometimes police seized illegal drugs at a Canadian airport, but it was all a very remote affair. No longer.

Now it would be difficult to find a Canadian at any level of society or in any part of the country who has not been touched in some way by the effects of the stunningly rapid

spread of drug abuse, armed robberies to get money to support the habit and violence among gangs who supply the deadly material.

This is a serious problem for all Canadians. It is starting to attack the foundations of Canada's families. It is debilitating Canada's youth. I thought, in 1986, it was an epidemic and I said so, I believe it is worse today and all Governments must cooperate with police forces, with educational institutions to deal effectively with this great challenge to our national well-being.

[Translation]

We have never sacrificed care and compassion in our national attitudes and programs while developing our potential to create the wealth to support a standard of social benefits which is the envy of many countries. We are highly regarded in the world. Others see us as one of the most prosperous, humane and promising nations on earth. Our vast geographic inheritance, our history, our two official languages, our native peoples and enterprising immigrants, all combine to create a society of civility and tolerance. A unique identity about which we have every reason to be proud. But our job is not done, far from it!

• (1200)

[English]

The only thing, Mr. Speaker, that I really took exception to in the speech by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday were his comments about language. He made some brave statements and I have to answer them, and I will. He made some brave statements about his devotion to high principles and then he proceeded to fabricate the whole cloth, my own position on the subject of the use by the Government of Quebec of Section 33 of the Constitution Act 1982, to override the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

He is quoted in this way: "By his silence, by his inaction, the Prime Minister of Canada is an accomplice to a direct attack on the rights of the Anglophone minority in Quebec". That is what the Leader of the Opposition said.

Another quote: "And what did the Prime Minister say about Quebec law 178? Nothing. What did he do about the Quebec law? Nothing."

These were statements by the Leader of the Opposition about an event that took place in mid and late December in the House of Commons, and the Leader of the NDP was here with me and we both spoke to this issue, and he knows and every other Member of the House knows that that statement by the Leader of the