

*The Address*

Let us be clear what is being said. If they say: "Let us get rid of the adversary system. Let us get rid of the partisan approach to politics," which has served this country very well for more than 100 years, I have to tell the gentleman from Timiskaming and his friend from Portage—Interlake that I cannot go along with that. If, on the other hand, their appeal is to not resort to the petty or the personal, we have never felt that should have been done in the first place. If he can be so good as to sidle up to some of his colleagues who, in answering questions in Question Period, regularly thrive on the personal and the petty, then maybe we are making some progress, if that is the language we are talking.

• (1700)

I suspect he is talking more than that. I suspect he is mouthing the words his Prime Minister has been pushing the last few weeks, that somehow we have to stop being partisan. I have to say to him I do not have any intention of going along with that. I will tell you why.

Our whole system is a partisan adversarial system. It is by criticizing, it is by holding up to public scrutiny the other person's ideas, by their holding up to scrutiny our ideas, that we come up with even better ideas. Our whole system is an adversarial system.

In the rush for sweetness and light, in the rush to find a new millennium, let us not throw out the best strategy of all for getting there and that is making sure that the kinds of ideas we have—whether it is about employment or whether it is about national unity—are held up to the most brutal public scrutiny. In the end these ideas will be so good that they can withstand that kind of scrutiny.

This idea that somehow we are going to put all our disagreements aside just does not wash with me and I suspect is not going to work in any event. Better that the government, of which that gentleman is a supporter, tell us what it has in mind instead of sitting on things until next February in so far as national unity is concerned. Then, if we have a few refinements and a few criticisms to make, instead of asking us not to criticize, the government should put its ideas out now and we can say what we think of them.

Let us get away from this false idea that somehow we are going to have a new millennium, a new credo where it is going to be all kiss and make up. That is not the

nature of this place. The nature of this place is that you have some ideas and I have some ideas and we are not going to agree all the time. We are sent here by the public of this country to see to it that the ideas we together advance and legislate to become part of the law of the land are ideas that have been held up to public scrutiny, have been refined, not by putting them under the rug, but by attacking those ideas and in the process coming up with even better ways of doing things.

I agree with him to an extent. Let us do away with the petty and the personal. If he asking in the process that we ought to turn a blind eye to the principles that we stand for, we cannot do that. If he is saying when he talks about doing away with partisanship, that we ought to do away with what separates us, I cannot go along with that. If he thought about it a little more, he would not go along with it either.

This speech has been in the public domain for two weeks today, two weeks since the Governor General came to the other place to deliver it. A lot of things have been said about the speech, most of them fairly harsh and the harsher I think the more truthful. It was my leader, the gentleman from Beauséjour, the next Prime Minister of this country, who put it very well when he said on the day the speech was made public that this speech was a cruel joke for the 1.5 million people who are looking for work in this country.

That best characterizes what we feel about the throne speech. It also, by the way, demonstrates very well what I was saying to you, Mr. Speaker, a moment ago. It is difficult to tell the gentleman from Timiskaming that we are going to have sweetness and light when they perpetrate on the Canadian people this latest cruel joke, the 1.5 million people out there who are waiting for some help, the fishermen about whom there was not a word in the throne speech. He wants me to lie low on that. It is fishermen and plant workers, 17,000 of them that sent me here in the first place.

There was not a word in the throne speech about the plight of farmers, about the plight of the forestry industry. Somebody asked me to kiss and make up. Somebody asked me not to voice my outrage on behalf of those people in Burgeo, in Ramea, in François, in the 158 communities that I represent. If somebody asked me to hush that up and to ignore this government's mandate—