

We Canadians are, perhaps, the luckiest people on this earth, born to wealth and to freedom in a world where most people will be poor and, in some sense, captive all their lives; we benefit from traditions of tolerance and law which protect us from the hatred and the violence that wound or destroy so many other communities.

Yet we have problems of our own which require skill and honesty if we are to solve them. Part of the reason for our good fortune is that, by and large, we have found the courage to take decisions which let us build on our extraordinary luck, rather than waste it, or split our community apart.

So, part of our good fortune is what we have made of it. Sir John A. MacDonalld built a nation from sea to sea. John Diefenbaker enlarged that vision to our north and to bring into full citizenship people who had been less than equal before - extending the vote to native Indians, creating an atmosphere where a Don Mazankowski is the Deputy Prime Minister of the country and the office reserved for British Dukes and Duchesses, or their Canadian equivalents, will now be exercised by Ray Hnatyshyn of Saskatoon.

We fought courageously in two World Wars and in Korea. We built the Seaway and satellite communications, and Medicare and the system of equalization, so our society can be both modern and compassionate.

In days to come, we must turn much more attention to what makes this country distinct as a community in a world looking for leadership. And now we have unfinished economic business - reforms in trade and taxes - to help us compete in a world that gets tougher every day.

I asked to speak to you today about the Goods and Services Tax - not because it is popular, but because it is necessary, and I believe that honest Albertans, when they have the facts, will recognize that this is the best way to change a system which now does serious damage to Alberta and Canada.

I know the GST causes real concern for people in service industries who were not taxed directly before. I know it is always difficult to replace a hidden tax with a tax you can see. And the present sales tax is well-hidden. Many Albertans honestly believe they pay no sales tax now. In fact, the MST took over \$1.3 billion from Alberta in 1988, \$600 for every man, woman and child in the province. Everyone here paid part of that sales tax.

This is my first speech of the 1990s. Over the last two weeks, I have been reminded that when Canada began the 1980s, I was Prime Minister. It would have been a different decade had our Government lasted longer.