

*The Address*

On the large scale we can see in this speech where Canada is and, I believe, where Canada is going. That is, from the model of a 19th century nation state we are in transition to a 21st century international country. Within this transition all of us have our specific proposals and hopes, those things we would like to see and achieve.

For example, I have been advocating the formation of an International Green Cross, a new international agency that could do for the environment what the International Red Cross does for humans in times of calamity and disaster.

Another idea I want to continue working for in this session of Parliament and beyond is the formation of a national youth service corps for young Canadians at the end of the high school years, even before entering university, a period perhaps of 18 months. Canadians of that age from all parts of the country could work in several streams of a national youth service corps on a rotational basis around our country. One stream, perhaps, of military service, another stream of environmental service and a third stream of social activity and service, and so on. All of this would help to unify the country and build Canadian culture as a result of young Canadians having the opportunity to live for a while in New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, B.C. and Newfoundland, and move around and see something of the silent promise this country so often hides from those who never stray beyond their own bailiwick.

These are the kinds of ideas I want to see accomplished. I know so many other members of Parliament and many other Canadians across our country have their projects, dreams and aspirations, but we can only accomplish those in a united and strong Canada. If we do not have a country, what do we have?

That is why this whole approach and the reforms talked about yesterday are so important.

Although the reference in the Speech from the Throne to our cultural accomplishments was only a passing one, I believe the greatest cultural accomplishment is the one that lies ahead of us. It is our greatest challenge to see a re-confederation on a cultural basis.

For example, consider education. The throne speech calls for a new culture of learning. Education is unquestionably the responsibility of provincial governments. Yet, no Canadian can ignore that over the past two decades it was the Canadian government that paid millions of dollars to train adults to be bilingual because

the provinces operating the educational system for over a century in a country with two large linguistic groups had largely fostered a debilitating unilingualism.

No Canadian can ignore the fact that today it is the Canadian government that must spend millions of dollars to overcome illiteracy and millions more for worker retraining, even though these, strictly speaking, are matters of provincial jurisdiction.

Provincial governments simply cannot clamour for more powers, judged against this record, until all of us who are Canadians define and defend Canadian national standards. Perhaps those Canadian standards can then be more effectively implemented within our regional and local communities. That, in my view, will be the essence of the constitutional changes which lie in the not too distant future.

The government's educational goals by the year 2000, just nine years off, as mentioned in the Throne Speech, include cutting illiteracy in half, doubling university graduates in mathematics, science and engineering, ensuring that 90 per cent of Canadians achieve high school graduation by age 25, and increasing employer funded training fourfold. That is a great Canadian national challenge. The even greater challenge is to all those who give cultural expression in whatever form to the Canadian experience.

Now is the time that all those people must come to the aid of their country and its definition, because that is fundamental to our future.

Since yesterday, the country has a clearly defined constitutional renewal plan. It has a timetable and it has clear leadership from the Prime Minister who unequivocally has stated, echoing the call of our Prime Ministers of yesteryear, that it is the Government of Canada alone which speaks for all Canadians in the coming debate over the redistribution of Canadian provincial powers and institutional change.

• (1730)

I would like to add an important proviso to that. While it is the Canadian government of all the governments which speaks for Canadians, we can and we must also go beyond governments directly to the people of Canada. When all the constitutional proposals for change have been made by the various committees and deliberative bodies, it must be the Canadian people themselves who decide. That is why the Speech from the Throne, calling