

The Address—Mr. Mulroney

drugs in the first six months of 1986 exceeded the total value for all of 1985 by some \$90 million, when the cocaine conviction rate doubled between 1980 and 1984, and when dangerous new drugs like crack are becoming prevalent in the United States and are now readily available in Canada. I do not care what some fancy Dans think, I am telling you that drugs are a problem in the workplace, in the schoolyards and on the street corners, and it is time that Canada recognized the gravity of this problem.

We will move in a number of areas, including education and enforcement. We must reduce both the supply and the demand. All of us in public life must provide the leadership, from the community level to the national level.

We are also confronting social challenges, including day care, battered women, drug abuse, missing children, child sexual abuse and pornography. I was dismayed to hear the Leader of the New Democratic Party suggest that there was nothing new, nothing of importance in the Throne Speech when, in fact, I believe I heard some other commentator say that if the Government is able to follow through and find the money for a number of these programs, the Government has put its finger clearly on the most debilitating problems confronting Canadian society, the Canadian family and Canadian women. The commentator states: "Bravo, if you can do this or do part of it, you will have done a great deal for Canada".

[Translation]

But there is still much to be done, Mr. Speaker, in other areas such as small businesses and entrepreneurship, science and technology—and I think there are more practical references to that in the Speech from the Throne—competitiveness, deficit reduction, tax reform, international trade strategies, the Canada-US trade initiative, and regional development.

[English]

We talked about Arctic sovereignty and regional development. The Government of Canada, on behalf of the people of Canada, very simply asserts complete sovereignty over the Canadian Arctic and will take the appropriate measures to ensure that we can implement that. We recognize that it is not easy. We recognize it is an enormous area, that sovereignty requires a visible, national presence. Canada will begin by constructing one of the most powerful ice-breakers in the world to enhance our sovereign rights and to contribute to the development of the North.

● (1340)

Other measures include more research on polar conditions, defence training exercises in the Arctic and the establishment of a national park.

[Translation]

In the area of regional development, federal Governments have for too long applied their policies as they pleased. The result has been lengthy delays, undue waiting periods, a

mountain of frustration and probably many good opportunities wasted.

[English]

One way in which we can do this is to improve upon the decision-making process. The best way we can do this is to give more responsibility and authority to our officials who are working and living, for example, in the Atlantic area. We happened on a situation which I am sure my friend, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner), encountered when he was in the ministry. We put together a package with regard to the Atlantic Enterprise Fund a few months ago. A few weeks ago at Cabinet when I made my regular inquiry as to how it was going, how it was helping small business in the area, I was told—and these are the kinds of problems which have nothing to do with partisanship, but have to do with life—that a small businessman in Atlantic Canada who was seeking that kind of assistance to create jobs was told that he needed 14 signatures by 14 different levels of government before he could get the money to create a few jobs in Chatham, New Brunswick. That is what is killing regional development. We have to go to the regions and let the people in the regions begin to decide what is good for them.

What regional development has lacked, I think, is flexibility, accessibility and sufficient authority on the ground in the region to get the job done. To achieve that, our response in this area and elsewhere is the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. I know there have been other agencies. I know there have been other tries. There has been a lot of money thrown at the problem. We acknowledge without partisanship that it has not worked. If money solved the problem, there would be no one unemployed. If the other agencies worked, there would be prosperity in the Atlantic Provinces. If traditional formulas had any benefit whatsoever, everybody would be at work. We just listened to the Member of Parliament for Restigouche (Mr. Girard) who is from a riding where 20 per cent or 25 per cent of the people are out of work and have no hope.

[Translation]

But there is no hope in Northern New Brunswick. However, it is not because of a lack of officials. It is not because of the programs themselves, of the financing or of dishonesty, but rather because people do not understand that the best results will come from the regions themselves in co-operation with the provinces, the municipalities and the various other groups in our society, and no true federal Government would say:

[English]

You are going to do it our way. The federal Government is now going to say: "Let us devise a way together. You take the lead. We will create the atmosphere and co-operate with you to create jobs".

I know that one of the most daunting challenges we still face as a nation is the issue of trade. It is daunting for us and daunting for the Leader of the Official Opposition who has the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Forst Garry (Mr. Axworthy) as his trade critic. But it is important. Canada is a trading nation.