

of over 50 per cent in some areas. By combined, I mean the unemployment rate plus the welfare rate. Unemployment is particularly high among young people. They are almost desperate. Women are frustrated because they are being confined to traditional roles. Factory shutdowns have become common place. Farmers are increasingly being faced with serious financing problems, and this is particularly true among those who are starting an operation for the first time. People are very concerned, and it is clear that the situation requires a sustained and concerted effort by all Canadians. We cannot leave the people in my riding and throughout the country in a situation that is indeed deplorable in the eyes of the outside world. We must take action, and we must do so as soon as possible.

In the throne speech, the Prime Minister reiterated his intention of calling a national conference on the economy. In fact, before the opening of this session, provincial first ministers had been asked to meet to set the agenda for the conference. This economic summit will bring together representatives of consumers, women, native peoples, the business world, labour and various levels of government. The purpose of the summit is to establish a new national action plan. It will be a success, provided participants can agree on certain economic priorities and on the respective roles of the economic partners, and if there is a commitment to some immediate courses of action. The Prime Minister also mentioned the possibility of future summits which, over time, would generate mutual confidence and a sense of shared responsibility for our national economy. He also defined the Government's role in the economy in which it would act as guide, mediator and catalyst.

A Progressive Conservative Government will be less intrusive in the private sector but vigilant over the integrity of the national economy and of national standards. The co-operation of all economic partners in a movement towards common economic goals, a concerted effort to resolve economic problems that are at the top of the priority list, regular meetings of these partners, and getting Canada back on the road to prosperity—these elements are all part of the grand design for national reconciliation.

The Progressive Conservative Party did not fight the Liberals and win the election to do what they did, which was to let the Canadian dollar float downward and try to solve the unemployment problem with bandaid programs. We are aiming for consensus, but we realize this will take time. However, we can take other important steps to help create this economic renewal.

The strategy devised by the ministers of our government is threefold: to restore fiscal responsibility, to remove obstacles to growth and to promote new investments. The record shows, Mr. Speaker, that the former Liberal government had to work very hard at the end of its mandate to leave such a bare treasury. Faced with such conditions, the present government got down to work seriously. Our plan aimed at reducing the deficit will be enforced in a fair, balanced and orderly manner and will allow us to restrict the growth of the public debt.

Nobody will deny that it is urgent to tackle the deficit. If it gets out of control, it will finally drain all financial resources still available and will prevent us from taking maximum advantage of new opportunities. It will exert a very strong pressure on interest rates and will eventually bring to a standstill all investments required for our economic growth.

• (1530)

I would like also to give my constituents the assurance that our Government will endeavour to increase the efficiency and flexibility of our financial markets. We will strive to improve employment opportunities, based on market needs, and stimulate investments in research and development in order to increase our productivity.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, will introduce legislation to improve market conditions, and will put forward proposals to stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation. And to better reward success, especially in the small and medium business sector, we will also have orientations to suggest. There will be initiatives to increase both Canadian and foreign investment. With regard to unemployment, that tragedy brought about by the former Government, our Government now speaks in terms of strategy. We are committed to put the economy back on its rails, in order to create jobs. It is therefore urgent to stimulate job-creating investment. But to be efficient, any strategy for increasing employment opportunities should rest on increased worker training and retraining. This is why such a strategy based on a broader utilization of resources will be submitted to the provinces, the labour unions and the business community, with special emphasis on the private sector. Intensive consultations will be held with these groups. I am convinced that we will achieve those most interesting results, with the one goal of restoring to Canadians their proper role which is to make this a united, prosperous and pleasurable country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Papproski): Questions? Comments?

• (1530)

[English]

Mr. Murray Dorin (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a pleasure for me to rise to address this House as the Member of Parliament for Edmonton West. After having heard the Speech from the Throne, I am confident in believing that a new chapter will be written in history. There are fresh ideas and approaches to show the country the direction in which this new Government will proceed in the coming year.

In this, my maiden address as the newly elected Member of Parliament for Edmonton West, I want to outline some of the reasons why I became a Member and indicate to Members of this House and my constituency those areas of personal interest and concern. I am very pleased that those areas have been