

The Address—Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney

the Leader of the New Democratic Party and asked him to forgive me, but I must go to the airport to welcome Laurent Fabius, the new Prime Minister of France.

This relationship is a cornerstone of our foreign policy which will help us in establishing and maintaining warm and fruitful relations with France at all times and under all circumstances.

[English]

I do not mean to be unduly critical today. Even if I tried to be critical of the previous Government, I could not do as good a job as was done by the Leader of the Opposition during the Liberal leadership convention. He was tremendous: deficit spending, declining productivity, declining commitment to research and development, abusive treatment of the private sector, the 1981 Budget, the MacEachen Budget, the NEP which just about extinguished the entrepreneurial spirit and debilitated the private sector.

We are going to re-energize the private sector in this country because that is the way new jobs are created.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I must say that it was with sadness when I saw the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition—

[Translation]

—reverse his stand in the middle of the election campaign, when, after he had made serious and important comments about the National Energy Program, he went to Halifax, and, probably after consulting with Senator Davey, who is also from Bay Street and who is here today, said that he was in favour of the National Energy Program.

[English]

It was an astonishing conversion and a debilitating one. That kind of retroactive provision is odious. Canadian wealth, prosperity and new opportunities are not built on confiscating somebody's property.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I say this because my right hon. friend was by and large not responsible. Nor was he responsible, but this is the heritage, for the downgrading of our military obligations, the churlish and vexatious treatment of the United States of America, our greatest friend, neighbour and ally, the United Kingdom and others.

We were left with unemployment at tragically high levels, an industrial base that had been gravely eroded and to which the Leader of the Opposition quite properly addressed his considerable ideas and force of character during the leadership campaign. The industrial base of the country was gravely eroded, and has been. The private sector has been under-capitalized and unappreciated by a series of these governments.

Today, not a word of contrition, not a single little *mea culpa* for what has happened to the country, not an ounce of humility. The Liberal Party has been wiped out in the provinces,

reduced to a rump here and we do not get even a little 'I'm sorry'. I am not asking for much, just a little bit of an acknowledgement that indeed perhaps the Liberals were not—

[Translation]

—in secure possession of the truth at all times. They are perhaps somewhat less perfect than the Hon. Member from Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) used to say occasionally! But that is not the point. I must respectfully say that I do not see how the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) can have the gall to criticize us for anything after having been with his colleagues in power for 20 years. As for us, we have only been in power for two months, but I can tell you this: Give us 20 years, and it is coming, and you will not recognize this country. Moreover, the whole area of federal-provincial relations will also be completely changed.

The Leader of the Opposition belittles the process of consultation and the notion of respect toward the provinces that are mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. We believe that these are important and even vital gestures in a federal state, and that we cannot operate without healthy and dignified consultations. This must be understood.

The Hon. Member for the Thousands Islands, who has been named his deputy for Quebec, accused me during the election campaign, and this shows the mentality of that party. The Hon. Member for the Thousands Islands, who is here today, said in an important speech in Quebec that the then Leader of the Opposition—

An Hon. Member: Laval-des-Rapides.

Mr. Mulroney: I am sorry, the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) said that the then Leader of the Opposition was leading a party of Orangemen. That is wrong: As the Hon. Member can see, I lead a party made up of Orangemen, Knights of Columbus, Ladies of Sainte-Anne, Daughters of Isabelle, Kiwanis and Lions' clubs members, of former Liberals, former Creditists and of all those who believe that the time has come for renewal and prosperity in Canada. To speak about Orangemen is to bring back a lot of nonsense from the 1940s. In fact, that was the traditional bogeyman of the Liberal Party in 1940. I think that after sober consideration the people in Quebec and in the rest of Canada came to the conclusion that they were going to put an end to the monopoly of the Liberal Party over the francophone vote in this country. Enough of that nonsense! We are going to vote for a new party and a new prosperity in Canada.

I regret to say that the Leader of the Opposition went to Quebec and found three separatists. Three. As for me, I discovered a population saddened by such statements and determined to reject them and to respond to the call for unity and progress. The people of Quebec and Canada decided that, since it was harbouring such harmful attitudes, the Liberal Party needed a period of rest, of reorientation and of renewal which might last a long time.