

markets. It is going to require very careful planning from the ship stage to the shipment stage, through the processing of our products right through to the sale on foreign markets.

The challenge to this government, this House and the fishing industry is very clear. We have to protect our environment in which those resources grow. We have to develop better techniques in fishing, preserving, and marketing. It is a tough challenge for Canada because other nations are competing for the same markets.

In closing, that kind of a challenge can be shared in almost every department of government. Certainly the challenge is something that all Canadians need. Canadians at this time are about to witness in Quebec a vote on sovereignty-association, separatism, a renewed confederation or a new federation. That is the challenge that we all need.

As a member as far away as any other member from Quebec where the referendum will be held on May 20, I want to say on behalf of my constituents that we all have some concerns about Canada. We all have things we would like to see. We would like to develop a national pride, a national goal, and a national determination. We in Nanaimo-Alberni encourage governments and the public to meet the challenge of a new Canada, a Canada of which we can feel proud, a Canada in which we feel some national pride, a Canada, and this is one of my particular interests, that sees a Canadian merchant fleet and Canadians travelling around the world flying their own flag and shipping their own products.

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, first let me, as other members of this House have done, congratulate you on your appointment to this very important post and, through you, to congratulate Madam Speaker—

[*Translation*]

—and I am very proud, just as any Quebecker, of the role she is going to play in the House of Commons.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, it is as the new President of the Treasury Board that I take part in this debate in order to bring some clarifications on certain important themes of the Speech from the Throne, and to make known some of my personal objectives, interests, convictions and priorities.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that, in accordance with the ritual we follow, the next speaker should be a Progressive Conservative member, and my hon. friend was on his feet. That is the schedule to which we agreed the other day and that is what we have been following.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. I want to respect the intervention by the hon. member. As he probably knows, the Chair is made aware in various ways and from time to time of members who might catch the Speaker's eye. While it is certainly not officially the habit of the Chair to keep any particular list, I have tended to follow that recognition of speakers that appears to me to be consistent with the views of

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the various members of the House. In any event, I did not see a member to my left stand on this occasion—I may have made a mistake this time; I am not sure. But if I did, it happens that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) caught the eye of the Chair and, once having done so, that hon. member remains recognized. I will review my thinking and see whether or not some hon. member to my left has been displaced. If that is the case, the situation will be adjusted.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I promise to keep my comments short so as to give the hon. member ample time in which to speak this evening.

● (2110)

[*Translation*]

To summarize, I shall say that in the part of the throne speech which deals with the development of our economic potential, there is the following statement:

It is the intention of my ministers to continue the policies of expenditure restraint and improved government administration.

The throne speech is right to make government administration part of our economic development. Let me explain why. If we want to reduce expenditures it is not because it would be wrong for the government to spend, but because we are asking Canadians to limit their expectations and demands. It is, therefore, essential for the government to do the same. We want to improve our government administration not only to save money, but because while we are asking Canadians to increase their productivity, the government administration must do the same. We want to reduce the deficit, not because of the magic of higher or lower figures, but because our deficits make it necessary for us to compete on financial markets, and because we realize that the costs of such deficits result in a heavier burden.

[*English*]

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that my comments today, together with my past public statements and writings, will help those who inevitably pigeon-hole and caricature ministers, especially presidents of the treasury board. I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that I am not a secret holdover from the previous Tory government, neither am I a “blue Liberal” nor a “closet slasher”. As a Liberal of the radical centre I am continuing the strong tradition of responsible government management of my Liberal colleagues at Treasury Board, namely, Judd Buchanan, Bob Andras, Jean Chrétien, and Bud Drury.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I thought this minister could do better than that!

Mr. Knowles: He is not ambitious!

Mr. Johnston: The formal commitment of the Liberal party to expenditure restraint, renewed in the Speech from the Throne, dates from 1975. It has been repeated several times in the ensuing years and, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) stated in August, 1978, we must provide “more for less”.