

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about my hope for the future, my faith in the Canadian people and my desire to bring about change in this country. I want to speak about those Canadians who work hard, pay their bills, raise their families, help their communities, hope for a better future and are committed to Canada.

In the past four years I have travelled extensively throughout the country listening to the voices of the people. What I have heard is of great concern to me. Canadians are losing hope. Four years ago almost to the day I stood in this place to deliver my first speech as a member of Parliament. I spoke then about an agenda for change, an agenda that challenged this generation as previous dilemmas challenged our forefathers.

Four years ago I saw that agenda in the face of the single mother who with her children was compelled to stand outside the local food bank for their daily meal. I saw it in the apprehension felt by the factory worker who understood the personal threat imposed by Mulroney's insensitive free trade deal. I saw it in the inequity of Conservative budgets which have unfairly overburdened our working middle class families while rewarding the chosen few. I saw it in the attitude of our young graduates who despite their academic achievements still encountered a cold and indifferent world. I saw it in a country as rich as ours in people with no shelter, no food.

In 1993, four years later, there are more food banks than ever before. Workers are still waiting for adjustment programs and the promised job opportunities. The middle class is paying more taxes than ever before. Young people are faced with rising unemployment and there are more homeless people. We are living in very difficult times.

I could for the next while talk about the government's inability to reduce the public debt which now stands at \$422 billion. It was \$168 billion when the Conservative government took over. I could also speak at length about the inability of this government to address the deficit challenge, the human tragedy of over two million people on welfare, and 1.6 million people on the unemployment rolls.

• (1205)

I could speak about the declining after-tax income of the average Canadian family, the 38 tax increases imposed since 1984. I could perhaps speak about the

325,000 manufacturing jobs we lost since 1989, the 206,000 bankruptcies we witnessed since 1990 and the one million Canadian children who live in poverty.

These are all very depressing statistics. However do not forget that this situation did not happen by accident. The Conservative government made some very basic and fundamental economic policy mistakes, among them fighting inflation at all costs, high real interest rates, a high Canadian dollar and a free trade agreement without adjustment programs.

Today I want to talk to you about something different. I want to talk about how we can turn this country around.

As a Canadian born in the 1960s, a husband and father of two young children, I am much more concerned about the future than the past. It is for this reason I will concentrate my remarks on the future of this country and the Liberal Party's approach to deal with the future. There is no question a new approach is required.

A Liberal government understands that in the emerging global economy everything is mobile: capital, factories, even entire industries. The only resource that is really rooted in a nation and the ultimate source of wealth is its people. The only way Canada can compete is to have the best educated, best trained work force in the world, linked by the most advanced communication and technological infrastructure.

As a nation we cannot afford to have 30 per cent of our high school students drop out before completing high school, at a rate of 100,000 a year. That is one million in a decade. We have over 400,000 young people unemployed at a time when over 300,000 jobs go unfilled because we do not have people who possess the required skills.

In order to develop these skills we will work with the provinces, business and labour to establish a national apprenticeship program, provide tax incentives for on-the-job training and create a Canada youth service.

Our priority will be to focus on our country's resource, our people. That means investing in people and providing Canadians with a comprehensive adjustment strategy. Canadian workers who have been displaced by the forces of globalization are prepared to adjust and desperately want to. We are committed to helping them because we feel that government has a role to play where market forces fail. Our responsibility is to provide