

*The Address*

This is the purpose of the throne speech. Some of the discussions on the throne speech have been to call on this House, as much as possible, to rise to the occasion and be non-partisan. I am disappointed this has not happened.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would ask hon. members to co-operate with the Chair. I have said that it is not a point of order. I listened to see whether there could possibly be a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary's point of view, and it is not a point of order.

I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support the Speech from the Throne as presented yesterday by the Governor General.

I listened carefully to the comments of the Leader of the Opposition as well as the House leader just now, and I regret to say that one important element of the Speech from the Throne has been totally missed by the opposition parties. We are trying to gain a greater degree of non-partisanship and a common approach towards some of the very key problems that we are facing as a country. Two of these I propose to discuss today; unity and prosperity, particularly prosperity.

The Speech from the Throne does present two over-arching themes, two over-arching concerns of Canadians today, one of these being national unity, the other being economic prosperity. National unity, at a time when Canadians are re-examining some of the fundamental institutions and approaches that have served us for generations. Economic prosperity, at a time when Canadians enjoy great benefits but face tremendous challenges to maintain and improve their way of life.

We stand at a crossroads, Mr. Speaker. One road leads to the creation of a new Canada; a Canada whose prosperity has a firm foundation in our ability to meet the demands of the international marketplace; a united Canada whose institutions, revitalized and renewed, will provide a legacy for generations to come. The other road leads towards disunity and economic decline, toward a fading power, a Canada no longer able to take its place at the table of leading economic nations, a nation whose

balkanized parts have neither the influence nor the strength to provide an environment for prosperity.

Future generations are going to look back to this Parliament as a time when Canadians faced squarely their problems and challenges and built confidently for the future.

But we do have a choice, Mr. Speaker. Do we turn up the road towards prosperity and unity, or down the road to decline and division? Each of the paths that we can choose from has two tracks. Our economic program and our progress in constitutional renewal are linked as if they were two wheels on one vehicle. Our desire for unity grows from our pride in Canada. But it is nurtured by our desire to prosper. Our social safety net, our standard of living, and our ability to seek fulfilling employment anywhere in one of the world's most envied economies provide powerful reasons for the country to remain united.

A united Canada has economic potential that a balkanized Canada will inevitably lose. This is a powerful argument against those who would pull this country apart. It is an argument against which the separatists have offered no reply. The shared desire to build upon our prosperity helps us see beyond any differences in language, race or partisan affiliation. Both keystone issues of the government's agenda, unity and prosperity, transcend the partisan barriers that regularly divide this House. We cannot afford to let our partisan differences interfere with our drive towards shared prosperity, any more than we can let political affiliation stand in the way of our efforts to unite this country.

• (1120 )

We will debate about how we will get there, but both sides of this House agree on the final destination: a prosperous and united Canada.

[*Translation*]

Let there be no misunderstanding. Choices have to be made. We have gone beyond the point of no return. In our quest for prosperity and unity, there is no room for the past and its less complicated realities.

The choice cannot be between a bold approach and one that is easy and familiar. The past is the past. Old approaches would not be suited to the present situation, both as regards national unity and the economy.