

I mention that because when the Liberals were in opposition in 1980, prior to that election, they made the same promises as the Progressive Conservatives made this summer. That is why people in the public service and in the public service unions may rightly be forgiven for being just a bit jaundiced about what is there, although it is my impression that the Conservatives were perhaps more intent on acting than the Liberals had been.

I am disturbed, however, to see that this is now going to be a matter of negotiation and discussion. It is a matter that, if not acted upon early, may well get either forgotten or may get bound up in bureaucratic boondoggles or hornwaggles and not get acted upon. I would just ask the Hon. Member to join with me in pressing the now absent President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) to see that the parliamentary committee be set up before Christmas with a specific view to maintaining a momentum on this issue. If the momentum does not exist, I fear in fact that the action that both he and I would like to see will not be taken in the life of this Parliament.

Mr. Daubney: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre that I will do what I can to ensure that the momentum is in fact not lost on this issue. He will appreciate, of course, that I am not in a position to make any commitment on the part of the Government. However, I can assure him that I have a real personal interest in this issue. I know that many of my constituents do as well. I recognize that the principles involved are not black and white. We are balancing two essential principles here. One is the impartiality and neutrality of the public service which, of course, must be maintained. The other is the right of individual public servants to freedom of expression and political activity.

This is not an easy question. It is probably fair to say it is not one on which there is any consensus on this side of the House, and probably not on the other side either. As an Ottawa area member and a former public servant, I assure the Hon. Member that I will continue to press for this. I hope, with him and other members from the Ottawa area and other interested members from across the country, that this matter can be referred to a parliamentary committee in the very near future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): As there are no more questions or comments, I will now recognize the next speaker.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claudy Mailly (Gatineau): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak in the House for the first time. I am very proud of the fact that I am here at last, after all the attempts made during most of the last decade.

I would like to thank the people of Gatineau who have given me a mandate of which I am proud. I would also like to tell them that I do not intend to waste a single minute of my time and that I am going to take advantage of this opportunity to

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get Gatineau the development it needs, as a riding that has tremendous potential but has been terribly neglected, especially during the last twenty or thirty years.

Gatineau was one of the ridings of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Although I have great respect for that great French-Canadian who put his mark on our history, I must say I am proud of the fact that I managed to win the riding for my Party, at a time when this country needs people with the courage to change its course and guide it in a direction that will help develop its great potential.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is accused of being vague in the throne speech, despite the fact that it contains the broad outlines of the new direction this Government wishes to take in administering the country. Heaven knows, planning and direction are something this country needs very badly! Too many ad hoc programs! Too many solutions based on political reasons, have adversely affected development and our ability to provide economic solutions.

[English]

We needed to have a new direction in our country. We needed to lay out the foundation for this new direction. It is very difficult to turn the *Queen Mary* around just by wishing so. You have to plan it. You have to make sure you know where you are going. You have to announce to the various technicians and experts, even to the engineer room, that you are going to change direction with this enormous equipment.

There is a similarity between what we have attempted to do as a new government, because the mess that we were left with by the previous administration and its previous administration and its previous administration is not something that can be changed overnight. Therefore, I would quarrel with the approach that has been taken by the Opposition, that in our Speech from the Throne there is nothing but generalities and pipe dreams and that there is nothing substantial.

● (1720)

[Translation]

On the contrary, the throne speech defines the structural problems of our economy which, for instance, have prevented us from providing for the lean years. Because of the enormous debt load, we did not have the flexibility required to act when, for instance, the economy of our biggest trading partner, the United States, was under pressure and buyers on the other side were unable to place the orders we needed to keep our factories going. Because we did not have the requisite flexibility, every time the U.S. elephant sneezed, we had no choice but to jump.

We must build this flexibility into our relations with our neighbour to the south who has a tremendous influence on our lives. While building this flexibility, we also want to ensure our country's sovereignty. We want to be able to make independent decisions to promote our growth and deal with the problems that occur from time to time. We cannot have equal