

inces within a nation? If that doubt transforms itself into reality, it will surely guarantee that we will all be made worse off. Economically, of course, but more importantly, the quality of our lives will be seriously diminished, our culture will lose its richness, our society will lose its diversity.

While the drive for regional power by premiers can be blamed for some of the problem, part of the problem lies here as well. Canadians must not only be free to move and to share the wealth in any part of Canada, but they must clearly perceive that these opportunities exist. It is the federal government's responsibility to ensure that these rights are protected and that this perception is made clear. The federal government must reassume its leadership role, for if we do not move now to put Canada first, we will surely witness the dissolution of the country.

If there is such a thing as alienation in parts of Canada—east or west—it is an alienation from the national interest, an alienation for which we are all responsible. Individually, Canadians do not have a great deal to complain about. Yet the country is deeply divided and our future is unclear. What has also developed in Canada is a “me first” mentality which casts our attention away from the benefits Canada has to offer, and which have traditionally been available to all Canadians, and towards the benefits which can be claimed by groups with special interests.

The survival of Canada as a coherent entity rests on a new appreciation of this national interest and a rekindling of the national will. We, the members of this chamber and the duly elected representatives of all the people of Canada, have the responsibility to ensure that this new appreciation and rekindled will are realized. We together, on both sides of this chamber, must reflect the common will and ensure that it is transformed into a living, dynamic nation. We, the members of this chamber, take a back seat to no appointed or elected representative anywhere in the country. The same people who elect the provincial and local representatives from Newfoundland to British Columbia, elect you and I. There is no truth or logic in the assertion that these other representatives are more clearly attuned to the people or are better able to reflect their needs and aspirations than are we.

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The people of Canada have given us the responsibility for protecting, promoting, and fostering the well-being of this nation. They have charged us with the duty to ensure that all views are considered, that all voices are heard. They have granted us the honour and the privilege of leading them into the future. We have been granted these by the people of Canada; but we will fail if we let petty regionalism and self-doubt strip away our ability to rise above the parochial regionalism and to put Canada first.

Mr. Speaker, the future of Canada is matched by few other nations on the face of the earth. But that future will only be realized if we constantly recall our purpose for being here, if we dedicate ourselves to keeping Canada strong and unified as a nation. In the words of Kenneth White, chairman of Royal

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Trustco Ltd., speaking at the April 17 annual meeting of the Commercial and Industrial Development Corporation of Ottawa-Carleton, stated:

We can direct our energies towards positive national goals or strive for a more self-centred regionalism where economies and people may be pulling in many different directions, thus nullifying any possibility of forward motion.

I believe that the feeling of uncertainty and self-doubt which is said to be growing in our country is a result of misplaced national vision, a national vision which has become focused on the material, on the territorial. Canadians are searching for their purpose, their vision. You and I, this Parliament, have the obligation and the opportunity to refocus that vision on a strong and unified Canada from one coast to the other. The task is complex and the challenge difficult, but together we can show Canadians their vision; we can rekindle that national will.

I look forward to working in this Thirty-second Parliament to ensure that the vision and the greatness which can be Canada is indeed realized.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, before commencing my remarks in this debate on the Speech from the Throne I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and through you to congratulate Madam Speaker on her election. I have no doubt that she, along with yourself, will exercise her responsibilities in a fair and judicious manner and I wish you both well in the duties you have undertaken.

I should like, also, to put on record the sense of honour I feel at being re-elected to serve the people of Etobicoke Centre in this Thirty-second Parliament. I express my gratitude to them. The last Parliament was far too short for many of us on this side of the House and I am sure hon. members opposite feel the same way, though for somewhat different reasons than my own. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to serve the people of Etobicoke Centre in this Thirty-second Parliament and I look forward to continuing to do so for many years to come.

Finally, may I offer a few words of welcome to the new members of this House. I myself am certainly not an old boy in this chamber; I came here for the first time in 1979. But I do understand very well the feelings of new members since it is so short a time since I came here myself. I am sure they all have the same sense of excitement, of achievement, of responsibility and enthusiasm when they think of the years ahead as I felt at the time I was elected, and still feel having been re-elected. I wish them well during the time they will be serving in this chamber. We may differ over various aspects of policy, but I am sure, as has been quite apparent from this debate, that we all have one thing very much in common and that is a very deep interest in building a strong and united Canada, a free Canada, a Canada where there are opportunities for many of our citizens.

A week ago today, hon. members heard the first Speech from the Throne in the 1980s. I listened to it very carefully and I read it very carefully, feeling that this should be an important document, one which addresses itself to the issues