

and closer. In fact, the consensus is getting stronger and the news is getting better almost every day.

Let me give you some examples. First, we all know that the entire world is struggling through a deep recession. Here in Canada the effects are very distressing on many people. We certainly have a lot of progress yet to make in turning our economy around and helping Canadians get back to work.

Yet, as difficult as our share of this recession may be, we are establishing strong footings for our recovery with actions such as an inflation rate currently under 2 per cent and interest rates which have dropped by almost half in little more than a year. And no less an authority than the International Monetary Fund has predicted that Canada will lead the G-7 countries in the path upward out of this recession, predicting solid beginnings of growth in the last half of 1992 and strong economic performance in 1993.

Second, about the good news, it has become common knowledge that over the decades of Liberal government Canada's productivity and our industrial competitive position eroded dramatically by world standards. It seems that the entire Canadian workplace became caught up in the easy life of higher spending and lower performance which characterized the 1970s and the early 1980s.

With the introduction of the free trade agreement in 1989, Canadian businesses were offered the prospect of the largest single market in the world in which to sell their goods. They were also compelled to face the reality of world competition where productivity really counts.

Naturally, we experienced some difficult adjustment problems and the transition to free trade has not been easy. But the direction has been the right one.

It must indeed be gratifying to all Canadians, and indeed worrisome to the opposition, to read business reports last week that indicate Canadian manufacturing is soundly re-developing its competitive edge and our industries are on the mend. This is another strong signal that the right policy actions are producing successful and extremely important results.

Third and best of all, it is little wonder that the opposition members are in a state of panic for a federal election when they see the handwriting on the wall. It says that despite the recession, despite our economic

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difficulties, despite our constitutional dilemma, despite the criticism that has been heaped upon the government, despite the sense of malaise that seems to have gripped our entire country and to which the members opposite have contributed in this debate thus far today, despite it all, the United Nations has just declared that Canada is the best place in the world in which to live.

What a powerful and momentous testimonial that surely is. Yet I am sure that it really does not surprise most Canadians, for many of us know just how fortunate we are to call this country our own.

Just stop to think of it. While the United Nations has not said that Canada is perfect by any means, it has said that we are favoured with the highest quality of life of any nation. Surely there is a message in that for all of us. Surely that means that we should turn our faces into the winds of the world. Surely we should stand a little taller and walk a little quicker and talk a little stronger. Surely it is time that we Canadians from all walks of life come to our senses and commence to concentrate on our profound potential and not on our few passing failures, on our strengths and not on our weaknesses, on our assets and not on our liabilities, on our hopes and dreams and not on lost opportunities.

I think this motion really is an insult to Canadians because it attempts to wrap up all of our problems and all of our potential into a veil of partisan politics. It endeavours to trivialize the struggle we are going through to build our nation by reducing that mission to an opportunistic election call. It demonstrates the apathy, the irony and indeed the hypocrisy of the opposition members in their bewildered and exhausted and frustrated view of our nation as nothing more than a prospective instrument for their own gratification.

Canadians know that it is not quite time yet for an election. They also know that there are real issues to be more fully resolved before we go to the polls. Canadians also know what the United Nations is telling us about our country, that it is almost too good to be true, that it is a model for economic prosperity even in these worst of times, that it is an example of social justice to be the envy of the world, and that it is a nation where entrepreneurial spirit is moved to flourish, that we are a people who give priority to environmental stability and cultural integrity, that we are virtually the promised land for the coming century.