

On November 8, Michael Wilson delivered before Parliament and the nation an important message from the Government. In the economic statement, he set out for Canadians the direction the Government proposes to take to fulfill our mandate for change - change in policies, change in approaches, a change in the way Government goes about its business.

Canadians are aware that this country has been missing opportunities to create new growth and jobs. You and I know that our competitive position has eroded over the years, and that incomes have barely kept pace with inflation. The confidence in the future that we all shared at the time of the centennial seems now to have slipped away.

If we are to get back on our feet, if we are to begin to take control of our own destiny and to shape the kind of future we as Canadians want, then we need first and foremost to face up to our very real economic problems.

The economic statement told Canadians that the Government is prepared to lead in a process of economic renewal. We are starting first by putting our own house in order. But we will need the ideas and support and will of the Canadian people from all walks of life to succeed in our broader goal of putting Canada back on the world economic map.

Many of the points Michael Wilson made in the economic statement have direct relevance to my particular areas of interest - foreign affairs and trade. The statement recognized a need to encourage Canadian enterprise to seek out new world markets, and I and my colleagues intend to give such encouragement. It noted that the time has come to correct some of the policies and programs of the past that have sent wrong signals abroad, signals that Canada had turned inward and did not welcome foreign investment, particularly in the energy sector. We are changing that. We are also determined as a government to do what is necessary to foster greater innovation and increased international competitiveness.

And the economic statement underlined the need for the government to bring about the changes it was elected to carry out in a way that is fair, open and consistent.

These are all important themes that I would ask you to keep in mind as I speak to you today, for these are themes that have very concrete meaning when it comes to issues of trade of foreign relations.

In many ways, the change Michael Wilson began is the easy part of our economic challenge. Virtually everyone agrees that we in Canada had to stop our plunge into debt, and the debate, generally, is about particular cuts and concepts. But the country knows we had to stop the spending spree. John Crosbie and I remember when the consensus about restraint was not so strong.