

Government Orders

courage of the men and women from countries around the world who came to Canada to build this country.

Mr. Speaker, my plea is simple. Let us work together, English and French speaking Canadians, new Canadians and native born, to give our children one united Canada where justice prevails and freedom always rings out.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mulroney: I wish to table, in both official languages, the terms of reference of the *Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future*, and its membership.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in this autumn of discontent, it is not only the constitutional future of Canada that is in question, it is the very future of our country itself. The policies of this Conservative Prime Minister and his government have shaken the foundations of this country. These policies have called into question Canada's ability to face the enormous challenges that are now on our doorstep.

[*Translation*]

All Canadian regions are telling us clearly they are dissatisfied. Many Canadians are questioning not only government policies but the political institutions themselves.

[*English*]

The loss of confidence of many Canadians in our political institutions runs deep. It goes well beyond the division of powers between the two levels of government. People are losing confidence in the ability of these institutions to deal with the historic changes taking place in Canada, and around the world.

At a time when the world is coming together, the risks are growing that Canada will drift apart. At one time, Canadians had a sense of common purpose and common enterprise. Those shared beliefs helped us to build a country that has been a global economic and political leader.

We should remember how we forged this country out of an unforgiving climate and against very strong north-south currents. The time has come to reflect on where we have been and where we are going as a nation.

[*Translation*]

Since the beginning our society has been characterized by the coexistence of two language groups unlike anything else. The association of English- and French-speaking Canadians is a foundation of our country's evolution. This association has led us to find specifically Canadian solutions to our problems, to create our own institutions and to continue building our country in our own way.

[*English*]

On this foundation, including that provided by our aboriginal peoples, we have built a multicultural and a pluralist society. People from all corners of the world have come, as did my own parents, to help build a better society, a better country, better lives for themselves and their children. Tolerance and accommodation of differing views and beliefs have been important to all Canadians. These very principles are enshrined in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canadians have always had a special respect for diversity. It is an asset and a source of strength and enrichment.

I believe that the Canadian challenge has been to reach for an ideal, while recognizing that we might never attain it. We have never measured the success of the Canadian experience by asking if it has ever been completed. Until recently, our progress as a nation has been in many ways the envy of the world. We persevered. We reached for new heights. We built a strong and a thriving nation.

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Consider our social infrastructure. Although it is under stress, and in my view under attack from this Conservative government, it is a system to which all Canadians must have access. It is a system to which many millions of Americans wish they had access. Our social safety net has been the product of an approach championed over the years by Liberals. It has been a system based on Canada's prosperity and Canada's generosity.

[*Translation*]

Quebec has also made remarkable progress in every area since Confederation and especially since the '60s. Its economic and cultural accomplishments in the last 30 years have been outstanding. From its performers to the economic progress made possible by its own people and the success enjoyed by its university graduates, Quebec has changed for the better.