

They are afraid and they are uncertain. They look to us to give them a solution to this fear and this uncertainty. Each one of us is only important in that we are here to speak for our constituents.

My constituents, those in Halifax, as well as the people I have spoken to all over this country are saying essentially the same thing. They are saying: Restore our country. Restore our faith constitutionally and economically. Each one of us who is privileged to sit in this Chamber knows that to achieve this is our most important job.

• (1750)

Consequently, this morning when the hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke, he spoke in support of a number of the government initiatives. Indeed, we on this side of the House do support a number of the government initiatives. We support the idea of a joint committee of the House and Senate. I have some concerns about the timing. I wish it were sooner. The fact that it is taking place is a move in the right direction.

We support the idea that the government will put forward its own particular views. Whether we will at the time support all of those views remains to be seen. Nobody, even at the risk of danger for the country, is prepared to buy a pig in a poke. We are here to represent our constituents and ensure that this country not only survives but thrives. The alternative is too terrible to really contemplate. The decisions that we make here, the actions that we take here, will be for each one of us crucial to our own future and the future of the generations who come after us.

Also, in a very important light—and each one of us has this belief, I think, deep down in our hearts—we particularly do not want to leave these jobs having made Canada worse than it was before we came to them. Each one of us, whatever our region, our constituency, our background, whatever the policies that drive us to seek political office, whatever our political parties, comes here, I believe, with an absolute determination to improve this country, to make it a better place.

If we listen to that commonality which is shared with all Canadians, then we are taking the steps to reduce the hurt and the fear and the distrust that has built up over the years—not just this past year but in previous years. We are taking the first steps to create an atmosphere in Canada where we listen to each other, where we respond to each other and where we understand that in our diversity is also to be found our commonality.

The Address

I turn now to the second portion of my remarks. Although we must always remember our higher calling and we must work together to ensure the survival of our country, it is not our only job as parliamentarians. We must still carry our passionate partisanship to the specifics of government policies. It is to this that I speak now.

There are many aspects of yesterday's throne speech that are troubling. If this is the last throne speech before the dissolution, and it well could be, there were many things missing from yesterday's alleged blueprint for government action.

One of the things that I noticed missing was the lack of mention of anything relating to a national child care policy or a national child care program. We cannot forget for one instant that there are still a million latchkey children in this country and they are waiting for this government to do something to alleviate their situation. Indeed their problems and the problems of their parents, and in particular of their mothers, are problems that are as crucial in their own way as are the problems of the survival of the country.

A country that is to survive must be a country that looks after its weak, its young, its underprivileged. It is our job again, as federal members of Parliament, to pay attention to this, to respond to this and to react to this.

There were other things that were not mentioned. As a member from the Atlantic region, I was disturbed at no mention in the Speech from the Throne about the fishery. I was disturbed that there was little or no mention of anything remotely offering hope in the area of regional development. I was disturbed that there was little or no mention of anything relating to the whole question of transportation and the problems that we have in Atlantic Canada as a result of the slow destruction, or in some cases the quick destruction, of the transportation infrastructure.

I was disturbed by the pronouncements relating to post-secondary education, not disturbed by the spirit of the statement. The spirit of the statement is fine. Again, it is one of those things that every one of us can agree with. What disturbed me was the call for yet more discussion papers and not a call to action.

Our universities are suffering. Nowhere are they suffering more than in my region with the highest tuition fees, the lowest salaries and the poorest physical plants. These are institutions of higher learning that have a proud tradition and send people from the provinces of the Atlantic right across this country and across the