

The Address—Mr. O'Neil

provides thousands of summer jobs to students. It cuts the young worker's exchange program. These and other program cuts will have a devastating effect on the unemployed young of our nation. Pity the young without hope for they will have nothing to inherit.

What is worse is that we are not even told of the effect of the economic statement on unemployment because of the Government's penchant for secrecy and surreptitious government. What is it afraid of and what is it hiding? I call on the Government, Mr. Speaker, to come clean with Canadians and to put its cards on the table.

We are not here to fight old battles or to settle old scores. Our duty is clear. We must forge ahead with vision and commitment to build a strong and united Canada, a just, equitable, decent and civilized society.

What will be the role of the Liberal Party in this process? As Her Majesty's Official Opposition, we intend to be vigorous, competent and constructive. We will fight hard for the individual and the disadvantaged in our society. We intend to examine thoroughly all government proposals. As my Leader has already stated, we will support legislation when support is warranted, we will amend when amendment will serve to improve, and we will oppose when opposition is necessary. We will seek to correct errors of omission and commission in legislation and, in due course, we will outline policy alternatives and new directions. Unlike the pseudo opposition to the left, we are not fettered by dogma, we do not live in the past, and we are prepared to change for a better future.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I put the Government on notice that the Liberal Party is but on a short sabbatical. While in opposition, we will rejuvenate, we will rebuild, and we will regain the support and confidence of Canadians. We will earn the right to be re-elected. Let me remind Hon. Members opposite that political defeat is as transient as political success.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there questions or comments on the speech of the Hon. Member? If not, we shall resume debate.

• (1510)

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your appointment to such a prestigious post. The manner in which you have discharged your duties today confirms the wisdom of your appointment.

I also wish to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. All previous speakers have spoken well. They have enlightened me about their parts of Canada. From the other speakers I have learned something about our West Coast, our Prairies, the North, and central Canada. Today I will be telling the House and other Canadians something about my riding in Atlantic Canada.

The differences among our regions have struck me, Mr. Speaker, but I have been more impressed by our common commitment to Canada and to the development of all our regions. It is a striking feature of our Confederation that we as

Canadians accept a sharing of our national wealth. We as Canadians are prepared to share our wealth with each other and to share our wealth with the world. Canada's generous aid to Ethiopia is a fine example of this commitment to the underdeveloped world.

Many national policies are possible because we share a commitment to all Canadians. Atlantic Canadians are among the recipients of these benefits. Such programs are viewed as equitable and in the interests of all Canadians. It is therefore not prudent to suggest that such economic sharing has been done at the expense of one region more than another. In our short history there has been give and take by all Canadians. As Canadians we also hold political and social equality as a high priority. Canada is truly a country which permits each Canadian the opportunity to achieve its greatest political office, that of Prime Minister.

Our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is of a humble but honourable background. Notwithstanding this, he has achieved the highest political office in this land. A humble beginning was no bar, geography was no bar, nor were race and religion. That is a great compliment to our society and our system of government. Yet I agree, Mr. Speaker, there is much more to be done before we can boast of total equality of opportunity.

The election of our Prime Minister with the greatest parliamentary majority in the history of the country is a tribute to him as a man. I am proud of our Prime Minister. He is providing the sound leadership Canadians have not received in decades but have so dearly wanted. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have a special reason to be proud. Canada's eighteenth Prime Minister is a graduate of St. Francis Xavier University, a distinguished institution situated in my riding.

My constituents, Mr. Speaker, are representative of many cultures: Irish, Scottish, English, Dutch, native and Acadian, to name only some. In an effort to better represent my Acadian constituents I have begun the process of learning the French language. My next major statement to this House will be in both official languages.

We in Cape Breton Highlands-Canso are a people of basic values. We are people close to the land and the sea. The people of Cape Breton Highlands-Canso have a history of social service, having supported missions around the world and the training of Third World leaders on the principles of co-operatives at the Coady International Institute. We have a history of supporting our neighbours, not only next door, but across the world's oceans. Sharing is very much a value we hold.

The people of Cape Breton Highlands-Canso regard the family as a most valued institution. I resist the urging to describe our values as traditional. To some that reference connotes a lack of worldliness. In light of the value we place on the family, it should come as no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Cape Breton Highlands-Canso value the life of unborn children. It is no surprise that my constituents strongly support legislation and programs that recognize the rights of unborn Canadians. These are values, Mr. Speaker, that I share. These are values that I am honoured to express for the people of Cape Breton Highlands-Canso. We regard the extent