

The Address—Mr. Mulroney

● (1310)

Mr. Mulroney: On his trading mission in Japan the other day, Premier Peterson of Ontario told prospective investors that we had created in Canada a new and positive working relationship. I want to tell Premier Peterson that I am grateful for his words and his support because that is important to building Canada. So, Mr. Speaker, we have made progress in the area of federal-provincial relations.

The next item we touched upon was economic renewal. These are facts. My right hon. friend can check them out if he disagrees with them. I think he would agree that today the bank rate is the lowest it has been in eight years. Interest rates are down significantly across the board from the prime rate to mortgage rates. Unemployment is at its lowest in five years. The deficit is down for the first time in six years. Program spending is down substantially for the first time in 40 years. Clearly, we are on track. Clearly we are going about it the right way. Perhaps it lacks some glamour and pizzazz but it is tough, hard, brutal work trying to put one's arms around government spending that was out of control, bringing it back—

Mr. Broadbent: Trying to put your arms around it?

Mr. Mulroney: I must say that when the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) admitted the other night that his father was a Conservative, I was tempted to put my arms around him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Now, Mr. Crosbie, is that legal?

Mr. Broadbent: You are supposed to ask Ray now.

[Translation]

Mr. Mulroney: Therefore, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what happened in other countries—and Canada ranks among the 24 leading industrial nations, those where the employment rate has been rising most rapidly—last year our economy grew at a rate which only Japan was able to surpass. I should think that this is a spectacular performance on the part of Canada. Our competitors are now beginning to realize that Canada is growing stronger still. I think that such a success does all Members of the House very proud.

[English]

I suppose that if one wants to get an idea of how we are doing, and if one does not want to listen to the Government or to the Opposition, then perhaps one should listen to our competitors, the people against whom we do business in a friendly way around the world. According to the 1986 report of the European Management Forum, Canada has moved in two years from eleventh to sixth place in improving our competitive position among the 24 leading industrialized nations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: When the assessment involves attitudes to Government, political stability and general wellbeing, Canada jumped from thirteenth place a year ago to seventh today. In categories examining such things as research and development, so vital to the welfare of our children and their future, the possibilities of regional expansion—

[Translation]

For instance, in certain regions of Quebec where research and development are so important, as is our commitment to universities through federal-provincial co-operation, people are wondering how our competitors who also focus on research, development and productivity can be in a position to appreciate what we are doing. So there you are.

[English]

In the category examining such things as research and development and adaptability to future requirements, the ranking of our abilities to innovate and look forward, Canada climbed to ninth place from fourteenth two years ago and that is solid accomplishment for Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I do not know. Maybe I am wrong and maybe I will hear a less flattering impression from the Leader of the NDP, but who knows? He said he voted Conservative 11 times the other day. I was a little concerned because, as we found out in Pembina, with votes like that, with the NDP voting for us, when the Conservatives get a majority of 232, the NDP declare a moral victory and go home.

Mr. Riis: You lost 33,000.

Mr. Mulroney: I want to be careful.

Mr. Broadbent: Don't count on it. We will see you in two years there.

Mr. Mulroney: I do want to be careful.

Mr. Riis: Thirty-three thousand down the tube.

Mr. Mulroney: Was that someone from B.C.? Did I hear from a socialist from B.C.? I thought he would be out there helping the cause.

Mr. Riis: The way you helped in Pembina?

Mr. Mulroney: Where are they all, anyway, those NDP'ers? I think they are all knocking on doors out there in B.C. and, you know, that was a smart move. I think the boys need the help.

So this is how others see us and judge our performance, on vital, objective international standards. Clearly, as the OECD pointed out, and as the EMF pointed out, when we are judged according to international objective criteria, Canada is in a position of strength and is growing stronger.