

*The Address**[Translation]*

If we know how to capitalize on our strengths and our potential, if we look for new solutions, and if, while facing the tasks awaiting us, we can communicate our hopes and our energy, we will restore the confidence of Canadians in their government. A country which was able to overcome its problems, which is competitive and which becomes more powerful and more independent, is a country which will be a model and an inspiration throughout the world.

[English]

In short, what Canadians want is a country to be proud of and to believe in. That is the challenge not only for this government but for this Parliament.

• (1700)

It is in that spirit that I invite the men and women of all parties in this House to join us in this national effort. I invite them to put aside old tactics that have so frustrated and embittered Canadians. I invite them to work with us in improving this country.

I am convinced that the new spirit that men and women elected to this House are bringing with them makes it possible for us to enter a new constructive era together. We all have an obligation to uphold the confidence Canadians have invested in each and every one of us.

Together we can prove that their confidence was not misplaced. Together we can do what every generation of Canadians did when put to the test and that is to meet challenges head on, beat the odds and build the country.

It is our mission to take this country and prepare it for the 21st century, to make sure that we will give our children and our grandchildren this land of freedom, opportunity and justice which is an example to the world. Today, as Prime Minister of this land, I tell everyone that the world needs the understanding, tolerance and justice that this country has been able to prove over the years. For me Canada is and will always be number one.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I wish to begin by congratulating you on your election to the office of Speaker and to offer you the co-operation and support of our Reform members.

Canadians made it abundantly clear on October 25, 1993 that they were not pleased with the performance of many members of the 34th Parliament and that they clearly expected a different style of conduct from the members of this Parliament.

As both a member and the presiding officer of this House you have a mandate from the people to encourage a higher standard of behaviour. As a group, we pledge our co-operation with you in discharging that mandate.

[Translation]

I would also like to congratulate all members for their election to the Canadian Parliament, and in particular the right hon. member for Saint-Maurice who was elected prime minister of Canada.

There are several people whose ambition to become prime minister exceeded that of the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, but very few people have served their country, the House of Commons and the government as faithfully as he has. I think it is important for new members in this House to see that not only ambition, but experience, knowledge and dedication are also rewarded.

• (1705)

A great man once said: He who wants to be a leader must be at the service of others. We would like to congratulate the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien who has become our leader.

[English]

Third, I want to especially thank the electors of Calgary Southwest for giving me the opportunity to represent them in this House.

I know from months of town hall meetings, surveys and door knocking that our electors have definite hopes and aspirations for this Parliament. They hope against hope that we will be able to control federal spending and taxation. They hope that we, the members of this Parliament, will be free to represent their interests even if that conflicts with our party line. They hope that we will be capable of giving to all Canadians a fresh and vigorous vision of a new federalism capable of carrying us into the 21st century.

I feel, as I am sure all members feel, an enormous sense of responsibility that we do not frustrate those hopes and aspirations.

I realize—and many of us as new members have been reminded of this on numerous occasions already—that much of the conduct of this Chamber is frequently bound by precedent. However, there is a sense in which the 35th Parliament should consider itself a House beyond precedent.

The reduction of the representation of a traditional federal party in this House from 152 seats to 2 seats is unprecedented in the history of federal politics although this fact does not seem to have registered yet on the member for Sherbrooke. The election of over 200 new members has already been referred to and is also unprecedented. The ideological and geographical alignment of the political parties in this House is also unprecedented.

In other words, in electing this House Canadians themselves have broken with precedent. Therefore we believe it would be fitting that this House also break with precedent in some important areas, especially in the conduct of its own business.