

am as concerned as they are with all of the rumours that have been circulating that their rights may be in some jeopardy.

I would have liked to have seen some reference to other Canadians, those Canadians of origin other than aboriginal, French or English.

With respect to the economic situation I cannot see a whole lot of hope for those people who look at the \$30.5 billion deficit, the debt of close to \$400 billion, the almost five million poor in this country, the two million who are on welfare today, the 1.8 million Canadians who will be served by food banks this year, the 1.5 million unemployed, and the bankruptcies which have soared and which if one compares to roughly one year ago are up in excess of 50 per cent.

My final point is with respect to education. He did make some comments. My hon. colleague knows full well that the Prime Minister, who was then the Leader of the Opposition indicated in his book, *Where I Stand*, that he would double investments in research and development, and that he made some similar promises during the elections of 1984 and 1988 indicating that he would not tamper with the transfer formula. He made some very laudable statements to his party at the annual meeting in a number of other areas of the country indicating that it should devote more time, energy, to human resource development. What happened? It cut the transfer payments in 1986 by 2 per cent, cut the transfer payments in 1989-1990 and froze them from 1990 on. Research and development used to be 1.40 of gross development and it is now down to a little less than 1.30. For literacy, \$4.50 per Canadian per year has been the investment.

Is there not a flagrant contradiction in what we have heard from the government, not only in this throne speech but in other statements? Clearly actions speak louder than words. I think the throne speech has a few good ideas but there is lots and lots of rhetoric, and I am wondering if the hon. member would care to make some comments.

**Mr. McCreath:** Mr. Speaker, I must say I would like to compliment my hon. friend on his speech, or was it a question? I am not sure which.

I welcome the opportunity to respond. He makes a number of interesting points.

### *The Address*

I read in the newspaper today that somebody said the throne speech is a one-day wonder. Well, the throne speech is intended, as I understand it, and most of them are, to be a statement of where the government intends to go. This one has clearly spelled that out.

Clearly the two priorities that have been spelled out are national unity and economic prosperity, and they are linked. I have spoken a great deal on the economic side. I want to talk a little bit about the unity side. I did not have an opportunity to do it before and so I will do it now.

We are all good at talking in this country, but we are not so good at listening. We are not so good at reaching out. We are not so good at seeking to understand the other guy.

When I reflect on what went on in this country a year ago, when I watched the unravelling of Meech Lake through the initial actions of Premier McKenna of New Brunswick and subsequently through the actions of Premier Filmon and Premier Wells, I said: "These people are speaking to their provincial audiences and they love to go on television and be interviewed and speak to whoever might be ought there, but they are not so good at listening".

Last year was last year. They will be judged by history for the actions they took and for the impact that they may or may not have had on this country. We have to start to listen to others. I might say the same applies to Premier Bourassa of the province of Quebec who is reaching out.

I am very pleased to see that the polls indicate the majority of Quebecers want Canada to work. The majority of Quebecers are federalists, but there is a strong feeling of rejection.

I want to send a message, a message that I get reinforced to me day after day by people in Nova Scotia who would really like to understand what the people of Quebec are looking for but they keep coming back to that great barrier that exists between English and French Canadians in this country today: the sign law, Bill 178. It is repugnant to democratic principles. That is what people see. There are so many things being said and so many things reaching out. People want to understand, people want to accommodate and people want it to work but they keep saying: "But what about that sign law?"