

As a westerner I can tell you very confidently, Mr. Speaker, that we as westerners want to build and not dismantle. But we as westerners must have an effective voice in the decision-making process. We must have a voice in plotting the direction and course of this nation.

I turn now to another major deficiency in this resolution, which is the failure of it and of the government to address the continuing erosion of our economic unity—this economic union called Canada.

I believe that in order for our country to be strong, the Canadian common market must be strong. Since we have been so preoccupied with issues that divide us, we overlook the fact that many of the factors which can unite us can also provide economic stability and growth and foster interdependence and opportunity.

We must not overlook the tremendous potential of our economic partnership in this country. The balkanization of our economy by provincial governments aided and abetted by federal policies—which are sometimes inward looking policies and sometimes very selfish—do not augur well for our national economic future. What is most unfortunate, given the kind of climate, the poisoned environment in which we find ourselves now, is that I do not hold out a great deal of optimism for that to improve. That is so because this government does not consult and co-operate. It employs the tactic of confrontation. And the situation is not improving; it is deteriorating. I must say that in the past 13 years, this Prime Minister has failed to address that very fundamental problem.

To emphasize the importance of the point I want to make, I would like to quote from a document entitled, "Interprovincial Economic Co-operation Towards the Development of a Canadian Common Market" issued by the minister of industry and tourism for the province of Ontario, the Hon. Larry Grossman. At page 6 it states:

If we are to succeed in our quest for a strengthened nation and a renewed Canada, then we must in fact begin by making a commitment and a conscious decision not only to rework constitutional arrangements but to build solid economic relations among the regions of Canada.

We need a new set of economic and political relationships that can accommodate our existing strengths across this country—in the maritimes, in Quebec, in Ontario, and in the west—in such a way that we reinforce each other in a genuine partnership that creates a stronger and more united whole.

But the problem has been that in recent years the traditional economic links between the Canadian provinces have been eroding.

And it is that erosion of economic links that could, if not reversed, threaten our very survival as a nation.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if this nation is to survive, it must do so not only as a viable political unit but as a viable economic unit.

For my part, there are far too many impediments and far too many restrictions to the free movement of goods and services, labour and capital, in this country. We must start removing the barriers rather than constructing new ones. The same study cites another fact which I would find amusing if it were not true. It is stated at page 6 that:

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In fact, Canada's ambassador to the European Economic Community has stated "that there are now fewer barriers to trade among the countries of Europe than among the provinces of Canada."

What has been done in the last 13 years? There has been a build-up of barriers and impediments, not a removal of them. There has not been co-operation; there has not been a working together. All the fault does not lie with the provinces. It is stated in the same study:

However, the "barriers to trade", issue is really only symptomatic of a broader and perhaps more important problem: that is, the lack of co-ordinated regional economic development strategies.

In fact, it is the development of competitive rather than complementary regional economic development strategies that is threatening the very economic framework that is necessary to sustain us as a nation.

Barriers are not only frustrating, they are costly. They retard progress and create tension. The provinces have tended to internalize the economic benefits of their provincial economies. In so doing, they have borne a cost in terms of greater economic integration and specialization. As a result of this specialization, our import level of manufactured products is the highest of any nation in the world. Why? Because we have fragmented our own domestic market. We have failed to look at the whole, and have simply addressed the parts. We have adopted a tunnel vision approach. We have failed to recognize our own market potential. If we do not do something about this, our manufacturing sector will continue to flounder and we will fail to achieve a vibrant economy. There are many, many impediments: provincial procurement policies, the equivalent of many non-tariff barriers, the lack of uniform provincial standards, and liquor buying practices. In my province of Alberta there has been a beer strike for almost a year. Whom did it benefit? It benefited the Americans; there has been a real market for American beer. Also there are licensing and certification practices, barriers to capital and labour mobility, competition and land purchase policies, hiring practices, marketing boards, restrictions on the mobility of professionals, fiscal and non-fiscal measures, and so on. We forget that we are not only political partners; we are economic partners.

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Transportation is a subject which is very near and dear to me. I should like to refer to Part III of the National Transportation Act which was passed in 1967. It was to provide a framework for extra provincial trucking in Part III. It has never been passed or implemented. The federal government regulates rail, air and marine transportation through a system of regulations, and provides the mechanism for policing and enforcing. In the area of motor vehicle movement, there are ten different sets of regulations; there is no uniformity. It frustrates the orderly movement of interprovincial trade. It is costly and creates dead heading. At this time when we are looking at improving our energy efficiency, it is wasteful and, above all, it mitigates against establishing an integrated multi-modal national transportation system.

These impediments, restrictions and unco-ordinated approaches mean lost opportunities for Canada and for Canadi-