

given my responsibilities—ought to say a word or two about the international implications of the current economic situation and related questions.

● (1252)

I think all must recognize, and I believe most of us do, that despite all the things we do for ourselves during the next weeks, months and years, Canada will not really be restored to full economic vigour unless there is a companion improvement in the economic situation around the world. It would therefore be a mistake if we were to assume that we had within our own hands all or even most of the levers necessary to bring about a desired situation.

Having said that the importance of this international dimension ought not to be overlooked, I think it is also of the greatest significance and importance that we as Canadians understand the real nature of our role in international affairs. Sometimes I believe there is a tendency to over-estimate or over-state Canada's ability in various world forums to bring about circumstances which we consider desirable. It is important that we be realistic and understand the limitations placed upon our actions internationally while at the same time identifying, clearly and unmistakably, those areas where we do have capability not only to improve our own circumstances but to enhance the general position of the world.

As has been demonstrated time and time again, Canada has the respect and confidence of many of the international groupings where decisions affecting all of us are made on a regular basis. For example, Canada has had for some time membership in the so-called summit group which had its most recent meeting in London in May of this year. It is made up of the eight largest economically powerful countries in the world. This was quite a recognition for Canada and I say that in a totally non-partisan sense.

Similarly, Canada plays a leading role in the OECD, the economic and co-operative development organization, based in Paris in which members are drawn from all developed countries in the western world. We also have participation in the International Monetary Fund and a range of other organizations, all of which are coming to have a far greater importance than ever before in terms of this universal or global effort to come to grips with the unique situation we face on this planet. At all of these meetings, most of which I have attended, a consensus has emerged clearly and unmistakably on certain key and important points. While these have been uttered so often as to become trite in many respects, the fact of the matter is they must be repeated because we ignore them at our peril.

There is a range of conclusions, some of them so simple that I would not insult the intelligence of this House by going through a recitation of them. One conclusion stands out above all others, however, as being central to international planning for economic recovery. It is that the energy crisis and the events associated with it over the past four or five years and certainly since 1974, have brought about significant and permanent changes in the world economic structure. I emphasize

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the word "permanent" because this is really the key to moving toward a solution. In other words, since these structures have altered in a manner that cannot be restored, new structures must be tried; new concepts have to be developed. As well, we must slough off some of the old conventional simplistic techniques which have been used with relative success over past decades to correct imbalances as they occur in the world economic order.

I emphasize this point for the particular reason that there is still a tendency for all of us, instinctively, whether in the public sector, in this House in government or opposition, or in the private sector, to ask what we did last time and to apply that remedy again. The truth of the matter is that in terms of our present problems there is no last time. This is a new, a unique situation.

At one of the international forums not long ago I heard a gentleman quote a Scandinavian philosopher, I believe, to the effect that the essence of tyranny is the denial of complexity. These words certainly ought to drive home to us that we are in an enormously complex situation and that those who propose simplistic answers are guilty, first of all, of the tyranny of tending to look inward in a very narrow self-interested fashion which ultimately will fail.

There is another danger with the simplistic approach and we are seeing it on every hand around the world. It is the tendency for people to believe that all will be well if only they put into decision-making positions some miracle-maker who can put everything right without any effort on the part of the people themselves. Of course, when the miracles fail to materialize, as they inevitably will, and when there is a continuation of the problems, as there inescapably is, the inevitable result is as we are seeing in one country after another, not merely a deepening of cynicism but a very real threat to democracy itself.

It is demonstratively true and necessary, therefore, that we in this House and all the people of Canada recognize the nature of the difficulties we face. We must not seek to proceed with a whole series of unilateral actions, many of which are mutually exclusive and which in the end will create a situation far more devastating than anything we have seen to date.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: If I may have just one moment before we recess for lunch, Mr. Speaker, let me try to put in perspective one or two issues in international economic affairs that are often overlooked. First of all the free market society—countries pursuing an open approach generated by and supported by democratic governments—have shown themselves to be far more vigorous, far more resilient than anyone thought possible in 1974. One has only to recall the dire forebodings expressed in this House just three or four years ago with regard to the free world economies and the structures of those nations to realize that they have shown remarkably more toughness than any of us had predicted. In other words, we had a tendency to underestimate our own capabilities. When you think that countries such as the United States, the European Economic Community or Canada have been able to withstand within a