

others outside Canada lose confidence in us, we should remember that we are one of the richest and strongest countries in the world. This irresponsible flip-flopping we get here and outside this place from day to day is what is destroying confidence in our dollar more than anything else. I think it is time for responsibility. Our Minister of Finance has demonstrated that with a very even-handed approach. He is interesting and charming, and he has a great deal of charisma. I happen to think he is one of the great Canadians, and so do most Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: Now more than ever we need to build on the strengths we have. There are opportunities for the future, and we have to look at them with our heads up. We must keep our eyes on the horizon rather than looking down with our boots in the muck which is being raked up by hon. members opposite all the time.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

● (1722)

Mr. Danson: We need enthusiasm, which we as Canadians and Liberals have; we need determination, which we as Canadians and Liberals have. We must not be spooked by the doom sayers and soothsayers across the way or those who do not know where they are going, do not know what to do, and just sit there wringing their hands.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: We need sound fiscal policies with our potential energy self-sufficiency and with a good industrial base, that is being strengthened, with a highly educated, sophisticated and skilled work force, with innovation, of which we need a great deal more and which this government is encouraging. We have a strong social base and we have freedom which is as great as that in any country in the world and greater than in most others. These are precious freedoms which we want preserved: freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom in our courts, freedom in our political system. Nobody tampers with those. Try and tamper with any one of those, and anyone of us here would be prepared to lay down our lives for it. These we take for granted.

We live in a country of unparalleled beauty, diversity, and richness. Rather than be depressed in these times, I like to look for the opportunities which exist. Businessmen and young people know they exist, and I suspect even members of the opposition know they exist but do not want to admit it. They are so intent on trying to score political points each time they get up, each time they face a microphone or a camera, that we might destroy ourselves, our spirit, and lose our energy and enthusiasm for this great and beautiful country of ours.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a delight to follow the optimistic and enthusiastic

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Minister of National Defence (Mr. Danson) and I commend him on his remarks. We are all optimistic about the future of Canada and we have every confidence in it. It is because we are an optimistic people and we have so much going for us that even the present government cannot destroy the country, although it has done its best to do so during the past ten years. The minister stated that we are on the eve of one of the greatest upsurges ever. Certainly that is a true statement, because the upsurge will begin the day following the next federal election when a new government will be formed and the illustrious group opposite will find itself on this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: I would like to pay a special tribute to some members of parliament who will not be standing for re-election, such as our former leader, the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), the former leader of the NDP, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), and other outstanding members who, for different reasons, are retiring or moving into other fields of endeavour. It might be a good idea at this time to say goodbye to a good many other members, especially on the opposite side of the House, who are not aware at present of the fact that they will not be back here. Many of them are really nice guys and gals, but in order to defeat this Trudeau government there are many nice members of parliament on the government side who will have to go. Therefore, we will wave a fond farewell to them at this time.

Again I want to commend the Minister of National Defence for bringing in new equipment for our armed forces, equipment which is now on order and will be delivered shortly, but none too soon because much of the stuff was hanging together with bailing wire, and so on. So, more power to him, but it should have been done before. I say this having had the privilege of serving as a member on the committee to which the minister answers.

I should like to quote another statistic, and again I am delighted the minister is still here. He gave us a glowing account of what is coming, and I am not disputing it, but I would have liked to have placed on the record at this time a glowing account of the number of personnel in the armed forces, which at present stands at around 80,000. Back in 1968 when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) took office, the number stood at 102,000. We live in precarious times and, with unemployment as high as it is, it seems to me that the number should be closer to 100,000. I believe that serious consideration should be given to increasing the number of our armed forces personnel.

It appears that there have been glowing reports about the wonderful Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien). I agree that he is a great guy and a fine man who has contributed greatly, but he is in a tough position as Minister of Finance. He can be the most engaging person in the world and he can be most charming. I have had the privilege of sitting on the committee which questioned him when he was minister of Indian affairs and northern development, and I give him full marks for his