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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Nouvelle-Écosse | 56e  | 1re  | Discours sur la santé | 28 Septembre 1993 | Ronald Stewart | Minister of Health |  |

Mr. Speaker pro tem, I rise in my place to thank you for the opportunity to pay tribute to not only this Throne Speech which is so forward looking, but also to rise in my place, it is an honour to be here and to share this Chamber with those who are here today and those who have gone before.

I would like particularly to thank the Premier for appointing me to this position, a position which I hold in great esteem. I pay tribute too, to our Speaker who has been not only a friend, but a mentor for some years. I should like as well to bring to the attention of the members of this House, the fact that I represent the constituency that has for many years been a desert and now we have struck a great oasis of liberalism.

I represent, so proudly, Mr. Speaker, the Town of Sydney Mines, my place of birth; the Town of North Sydney; and the Village of Florence, perched on the cliffs of the north side of Sydney Harbour and so well known for its hospitality; we and my ancestors fueled the mills of the steel plant in Sydney through its coal deposits; we in many ways fueled the war effort that brought such honour to Cape Breton and to this province and to this country and of course, Our Port of North Sydney, the gateway to Our sister Province of Newfoundland.

I rise too, Mr. Speaker, in the light of the proud tradition from my constituency, of all political stripes, from the Liberal Mr. O'Handley in the 1950s, the Conservative Dr. Tom McKeough my once family physician, to Mr. Arsenault the NDP representative at one time, and to Mr. Young my predecessor, to whom I would pay my respects particularly holding on to such a demanding office in light of his personal difficulties and I have so much greater respect having had to do the same, though of a very minor nature in the last several weeks.

I am not a child of political tradition, Mr. Speaker. So, I could say, so to speak, I am not a congenital anomaly, but I do have some very brief and rather inglorious traditions in my family of political activism. My thoughts go back, for example, to my great granduncle who was, somehow, persuaded to run in the local town council in Sydney Mines many years ago, and received the grand total of 13 votes. With his Calvinist piety he raised his eyes heavenward and said, one more than our Blessed Lord.

I retain that optimism, perhaps not that piety, but the optimism, and ours is not a grand tradition, I confess. One of my soon-to-be forgotten relatives way back found himself on a committee of the town council considering school issues in which he was debating the motion to provide an encyclopedia for every student, and he objected strenuously because he thought each student should walk to school as he had as a child. Perhaps unschooled he was but, nonetheless, sincere and very dedicated to his community, as I hope at least that part of the tradition will live in myself.

So great traditions do abound in Cape Breton North still but, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, as has been said to me, one can't eat tradition. So the problems in our constituency reflect the problems around this province: despair because of unemployment, a rate that has been quoted up to 25 per cent to 30 per cent; problems associated with that among the poor and even among the less poor; problems of youth; problems of disintegration of family units; and problems of the economy in all of its ramifications.

Our resources are there and the main resources, Mr. Speaker, are our people, as is the case all around this province. We look back on our traditions which reflect the solidity of our people in hard times. We look at the part we have played during wartime, all three of them in this century, and we would look to build on those traditions, even in the 1990's. We have, for example, begun to plan for the establishment of projects which would recognize and Mr. Speaker pro tem, I rise in my place to thank you for the opportunity to pay tribute to not only this Throne Speech which is so forward looking, but also to rise in my place, it is an honour to be here and to share this Chamber with those who are here today and those who have gone before.

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I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Cape Breton North for providing the opportunity for me to serve in this exciting government, in this exciting time of reform. I say again to the Premier and to the members of my constituency that my gratitude, I hope, will stir me on to work hard in this portfolio and do credit, not only to this government but to this House and to this province.

Health, Mr. Speaker, has been defined by the World Health Organization in a very broad way, as the social, economic, medical and emotional well-being of human beings. It is this broad view of health that we must take as we debate the issues facing us here in this province and debate them we will.

We can no longer afford the credit card mentality that has driven our system, in terms of payment of bills and owing up to the costs of medical care. But let us not be mistaken, we have enough money in the system, we need to use it more wisely.

If I might say by way of aside, Mr. Speaker, I had a call recently in the evening from a rather distraught friend of mine who is an American paramedic whom I trained in 1975. He was injured in an ambulance accident and was laid off, disabled from a post head injury seizure disorder. He has four children, one of whom suffers from severe asthma, a girl of 10 years of age. He was calling to tell me that she had been hospitalized for one and a half days for treatment of severe asthma. Only last year she suffered a cardiac arrest at his home. He was required to do cardio-pulmonary resuscitation en route to the hospital with his nine year old daughter.

She spent only one and a half days in that facility because they could not afford to keep her any longer because they have no health care, no health coverage whatever. The bill for that time was $5,400. He is now destitute and dependent on community handouts for his health care for her drugs and perhaps for even more than that. This, Mr. Speaker, will not happen in this province and it will not happen in this country.

I will have more to say very shortly during this session and in this sitting about health care, focusing particularly on the needs of seniors and, indeed, on the subject of prevention. May I say briefly, because the hour is late, that it is a great privilege for me to sit in this Chamber and share the camaraderie and share the debates with colleagues on both sides of this aisle. But I might say that it is an exciting time to sit, particularly on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, with a government intent on good change, with a Premier who knows where he is going and, indeed, with a Cabinet which continues to inspire confidence and which is reflected in the comments and in the polls in this province.

This Speech from the Throne that we are debating is a blueprint. Although general, it gives our direction. It is a blueprint indeed for action and action it will be.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I would thank you for the opportunity and the opportunity of this House, and I would advise I am voting in favour of the main motion and against the amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the House has a tradition that I totally respect with all of my heart and soul and a tradition that I enjoy and I truly do. It is a tradition that every Nova Scotian should be proud of and I say to each member of this Assembly today, and those who will join us in the future, you must remember this tradition. You must use it and you must praise it at every opportunity in this Assembly. You must remember what this Assembly stands for and what politics is all about and how you got here. You must respect it. You must respect this tradition and the role that you have become involved in with regard to the debates.

Mr. Speaker and Deputy Speaker and, of course, members, I want to congratulate each of you on your selection to offices like the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker. I want to congratulate each member of this Assembly, the 52 that have been returned here by the people that they serve, the people that voted for them.

I want to thank the Premier, publicly, for giving me the opportunity the opportunity to serve in the Executive Council of this province at this very difficult time and it is a difficult time. When I go home on the weekends and I have constituency office hours every weekend, people say to me, Guy, things are bad, and I can look at them and smile and I can say, and I am pleased and you can be pleased that we are there today to lead this province at these very difficult times in our history. I truly thank the Premier for this opportunity and I thank him on behalf of all my constituents and on behalf of my family and on behalf of those who have supported me over the years throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, housing, I believe will be used as an economic tool or part of the economic tool because what is community development? Community development is education, housing, and church, it is the community. I am telling you under this government with our social conscience towards the future, that this government will be giving leadership with regard to community housing and this government will never forget people, because that is what the Liberal Party stands for and that is what it is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today as a member for Cumberland South and I want to thank the voters for sending me one more time. Cumberland South, the new riding and an area that is one of the largest in the province of Nova Scotia, outside of Victoria I believe, or about the same, and Guysborough. The three largest areas in the province. Approximately 150 miles from one end to the other in my constituency. It spans from the Cumberland-Colchester

County Line at Folly Mountain through to the Cumberland-Colchester County Line at Five Islands, on through to Parrsboro, Advocate, Minudie. Remember these names and visit them, Joggins, River Hebert, Springhill Junction, Oxford, Wentworth, Westchester, Collingwood and Springhill and all the dozens of communities in between. Those of you who are elected in the metropolitan area, you know you should come up and stay for a week to show you what politics is all about in the rural areas and I am sure the honourable member for Victoria would do the same thing, because his area is very large as well.

Cumberland South is part of a great tradition. The Cumberland Centre riding and the Cumberland West, which was served by the member now for Cumberland North. We have very few members over the past number of years. They have all been elected for quite a long time. The late A.J. Mason, the late Stephen Pyke and the late Raymond Smith, which some people in this House served with. Some of those people, who are not with us anymore. In the former members of Cumberland West, the late Allison Smith, George Henley, Gardner Hurley, all of us I guess who were here who are not here for the first time, all served with in this House of Assembly.

In the Boundary Commission Report that went through this House and was voted on by every member, the report that redesigned the boundaries in the province, they learned very early the vast size of some of the constituencies. They stated very clearly in their report that was accepted by this House of Assembly that constituencies such as Cumberland South needed extra support staff through the Speaker's Office and Guysborough, I believe, there was three ridings. That report was accepted by this House of Assembly by all political Parties.

Mr. Speaker, your office and the Assembly must ensure that the Boundary Commission Report is lived up to in detail; that the people of Cumberland South should be given the extra support that was promised by a vote of this House through the Boundaries Commission Report when that was accepted.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with you in your office to ensure that my people, the people of areas like Victoria and Guysborough, receive what was promised to them and what was voted on and supported by this House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that the Speech from the Throne is a new beginning. I would ask all members of this House, no matter what political Party they are associated with, and I would ask all Nova Scotians to remember that this is a new beginning. Yes, it is a new direction and some people will be opposed and some people will be unsure and some people will ask questions and that is fine. But let's make it very clear, this is a new direction.

Now some may not agree with that, as some members of the Opposition have done, some may joke about the increase in day care spaces by 50. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would sooner be a member of a government that is prepared to increase day care spaces than be a member of a government that cuts them back or does not give us any.

Mr. Speaker, they may joke about the increase in PSA that my honourable colleague, the Minister of Community Services fought for and urged through the Cabinet, but I stand here today in the 1990's and I am proud that our government will give an increase with regard to PSA, although it may be small, but it is an increase. That is liberalism and that is what we stand for, for those in need.

Mr. Speaker, there may be some who will comment on the Credit Union Act. I want to tell you, the credit unions have a future in this province and the credit unions will be part of the economic development of the Province of Nova Scotia under this government. I can assure you of that.

They may criticize the emphasis on natural resources or community development but, Mr. Speaker, let's make it very clear to all Nova Scotians that this government is new and this government is taking this province in a new direction. I feel very good about that and I feel proud and honoured.

I can assure you that the Cabinet and the government has spent a great deal of time on this Throne Speech. We have carefully prepared our policies and programs for we have a new vision for Nova Scotia. We have a vision with a future for the younger generations in this province. That is what we are about and that is our job and that is the road we must go down.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Throne Speech is a clear illustration of a new direction and a new tomorrow. More importantly, we are dealing with the future, the future of our children and grandchildren. It does not matter what political Party we may be associated with, all Nova Scotians must understand this. We are not dealing today with somebody who wants a little more, who is living the good life, that somebody is not prepared to share the pain. We are a government about the future, the Throne Speech is about the future, our budget will be about the future and that is what we want in this province and that is the direction that we are heading.

Mr. Speaker, our government must have some means, this might be a bit heavy, the Minister of Government Services said, God, Guy this is a bit heavy, but anyway, our government must have some means of combating the process by which people become prisoners of their own procedures. Now, I want people to think about that. The rule book becomes very thick and then people want to add their own new paragraphs daily on new rules and regulations. The rule book becomes so large that nobody can handle it.

Well, the idea book, the common sense book, the book that will give us the new tomorrow becomes very small because there are no new ideas or suggestions and that is the difference between the former government and the present government because we will get the ideas from people. Government has truly forgotten its role, not this one and that is why people are not going to like some of the things we are going to do. Some of the members in this Liberal Party are going to take some heat for a while but believe me, take it today because you will be smiling tomorrow when we see the results in what is going to happen three or four years down the road.

I believe that government has forgotten its objectives altogether. I believe that MLAs and MPs, municipal politicians and those involved in public life are very good people from all Parties and all groups within our society, I truly mean that. But, many of them were wise, and many haven't been and those that are wise have learned from the mistakes of those that preceded them. I urge all members to remember the past relating to this House, I urge you to remember those who have served before, it doesn't matter what political Party they were with, because I tell you, during my 20 years in this Assembly, I have heard good ideas from everybody that took their place in this House and outlined the future that they want for the province, so it is there.

I would wager that most members who have gone through these doors would say, Guy, boy am I proud of my record, but we should have tightened the purse strings years ago. Now, we are picking up the pieces, not only the government but Nova Scotians and the members of the Opposition. We are going to grow with these pieces for the opportunities for the future of this province, for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I say through you sir, to all members of this House of Assembly, that the day of giving everyone and every group that comes through the doors exactly what they want is over. The days of government being all things to all people are gone and this province and all provinces in this country and throughout the free world, they are gone. The new role of government is one of strong leadership, one of direction and one of involving people and one of encouraging people to become partners with the government for the future of this province. Mr. Speaker, we owe our children that future, we owe our children the same opportunities that we had, all of us that are in this Assembly today, when we decided to go out on our own, I want to tell you, there was more opportunities there then than there is now and it is the role of the government and the role of the Opposition and the role of society to change that, to bring it back, so these young people like the Pages, will have the same opportunity that we had, when we were starting out on our own.

Mr. Speaker, that we must do. We owe our children and don't forget what I am saying here. We owe our children the right to control their future and the future of this province and not have their future controlled by some lending institution in New York or Boston and let's not ever forget that. We have been elected to give leadership, it is time that strong leadership and true responsibility of democracy in government is returned to the halls of his Chamber and I can guarantee, it will be.

We must base our decision on future generations. We must secure the future for our residents within this province and those that want to be part of our future.

Mr. Speaker, that is the direction that I will work towards. Of course, living in a democracy with people involved, the people have the right to send others to this Chamber with different ideas and approaches, but they sent us. We did not come in here by putting anything under the rug. We talk about patronage, we talk about community development, we talk about fiscal management, we talk about trying to create jobs, we talk about the fisheries and we talk about those things. They were all on top in our documents and that is our direction for the next four years and we will not change from it.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the Government of Nova Scotia through the Minister of Transportation, we must work in partnerships with those in Ottawa and we must look at developing new agreements not only to serve the Trans Canada Highway, but we should look for an agreement from Maccan, Minudie, Apple River up through, if I can use my honourable friend here from Colchester North, right up through to Parrsboro to the corner of the highway where we come back out on the Trans Canada.

This province cannot afford to do that so we must become partners with Ottawa and we will negotiate those types of agreements. I realize that maybe I am going too fast, but, however, I only have 3 minutes or 4 minutes left.

There must be a priority for economic development. The people of Cumberland are prepared to work with us. Let us be honest, economic development, community development in Cumberland County that I worked through and members of the former government I have worked with is a perfect example and that is the way that we must go in the future and that is what 30-60-90 is all about in this province and we will stay on that track.

I believe if we are committed and dedicated that we can negotiate and we can bring a new tomorrow, with regards to our natural resources. Already the minister is bringing new programs as was announced today forward.

Each of us must face today's financial situation, not only in Nova Scotia, but across this country. When I look at our budget and what we pay in service charges or in service debt, I could take and add resource development, government agencies excluding everything under the government's agency, Transportation, Housing, Fisheries, Civil Service, the whole package and add them all together excluding Education, Health and Social Services and I would not have enough money to service the debt in this province for one year which is around $800 million.

We cannot allow our economy to be destroyed in Nova Scotia as Bob Rae destroyed the economy in Ontario, and possibly the economy of Canada. Never has a government destroyed the economic heart of a nation, never in the history of this country as the NDP Bob Rae has destroyed the heart of this nation by the destruction economically of Ontario and let everybody realize that and believe it and keep it in your heads forever.

There is only one other person that came close and he has gone into retirement and his name was Brian Mulroney, he came close. In fact, Bob Rae might have got his ideas from him because his was one of no fiscal control, fire lots of money on the wall and we will get you into this. You see what happens, our citizens are paying for it in Nova Scotia.

Today I turned on the radio this morning when I woke up the first thing I hear is Ontario has been called to the round table because their credit rating may be dropped. Who would have believed that a year or two years ago. Well, that shows and clearly illustrates the responsibility that we have as a government in what we must do in the next 6 months to the year ahead. We must not ever waver from that mission.

I was asked to adjourn the debate at 5:50 p.m. as I understand we are having the vote today. I could talk about the 30-60-90 more, I could talk about Buy Nova Scotia, over a 100,000 jobs. I wanted to talk about Sunday shopping. I am basically opposed, but if the honourable minister lived in Cumberland County where everybody goes to Moncton on Sunday and if he was in business there, let me tell you, he would have a different attitude than he has here in the House of Assembly. I cannot vote for my personal beliefs I have to vote for the economy of my area and what I believe in in that area should happen.

The community college he touched on that. Oh, would I love to speak for an hour on the community colleges in this province. Could I give you a lesson on that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that, of course, I will be opposing the amendment and I ask every member in this Assembly to realize what voters told you. Voters told you they wanted a new direction and a new tomorrow. Well, join this government and vote for the motion and get that new direction and new tomorrow.

The motion before the House is that the Speech be adopted. There is one amendment submitted to the motion for adoption. I have a copy of that amendment here. The order is that we will vote on the amendment first and then on the main motion for adoption. The amendment reads as follows:

(1) That this House lacks confidence in this government because the Throne Speech fails completely to make jobs the priority and focus upon genuinely new policies to provide the framework for Nova Scotians to emerge stronger from today's economic downturn; and

(2) That the Throne Speech demonstrates that a Tory is a Liberal too by choosing to pursue the focus upon deficit cutting and the rest of the agenda pursued by the defeated Conservative Government.

That is moved by the honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party and is the only amendment submitted. We will, therefore, now vote on the amendment.

Is the House ready for the Question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say. Contrary minded, Nay. The motion is carried in the negative.

We will now move to the main motion that the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne do pass.

Is the House ready for the Question? Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

Ordered that the Address as a whole do pass. Ordered that the Address be engrossed. Ordered that the Address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor by such members as are of the Executive Council.