

Thank you Mr. Speaker,

It with great pleasure that I rise today to second the motion for acceptance of the speech from the throne for the third session of the 56th Legislature of the province of New Brunswick.

I too want to extend congratulations to the new member for New Maryland Sunbury West, and the new leader of the opposition. And I know that our three new cabinet ministers will excel in their new jobs, and I look forward to working with them as we move ahead.

As was indicated in today's throne speech, this is a critical time for the province of New Brunswick. The global economy is in far worse shape than it was a year ago. We are well-positioned to weather that economic storm here in this province. But there is no question that the global situation has had an effect here in New Brunswick and that it will continue to have an effect in the coming months and possibly longer.

As the speech from the throne indicated we will soon get a full economic update from the minister of finance. But I think it's safe to say that these are serious times for governments worldwide. Politicians need to roll up their sleeves, sharpen their pencils and do what is necessary to help us through these difficult times.

I was first elected to this chamber more than 36 years ago, so I have seen some things. I have had the privilege to sit as a member of the opposition, a private member, minister, and speaker of this house. I've presided over my share of heated debates.

Given the economic situation we are all facing, I think now is the time to work as effectively as possible in this chamber. We have two parties in this house and presumably different ideas on helping New Brunswickers through these difficult times. But I don't think we should get caught up in bickering, and grandstanding. That is not what New Brunswickers want when they are worried about their jobs and their future.

New Brunswickers want a steady hand on the wheel and that is what this government will offer them. As the throne speech indicates we will focus on the basics as building blocks for a self-sufficient province. Economic development, building on our burgeoning energy hub, and improving our education system are what we will focus on this coming session.

That's a sensible approach to governing, and one I know will be appreciated by the people of my riding of Grand Lake Gagetown. My riding stretches from the outskirts of the capital city, to Minto and Chipman, up to Kent County down to Cumberland Bay, Coles Island, Cambridge Narrows Gagetown, Queenstown and Wickham. The people I represent come from all walks of life. But they share the optimism of this government and this premier that New Brunswick can be better. It is our job as a government to help New Brunswickers build a better province. Our people have the spirit and desire to grow. It is our job as a government to provide them with a plan to grow.

As laid out in the throne speech we are doing that through investing in innovation and emerging sectors while helping our traditional industries adapt to a global marketplace. I know the forestry workers in my riding are looking forward to measures that will be taken soon to help their industry adapt and thrive.

We are exploring ways to allow New Brunswickers keep more of their hard earned-dollars in their pockets. The tax reforms being considered are designed to grow the wealth of our citizens and businesses. That will make New Brunswick the place to be for businesses and workers, and provide opportunity for our young people and bring other New Brunswickers home.

And finally as someone who has worked very closely with seniors and some of our less fortunate citizens over the past year I can assure you the top priority of this government is to take care of our own. That is at the core of our Liberal values and this government will be there for those New Brunswickers that need help the most.

Those are some of the ideas and policies that this government will put forward in the coming months. I look forward to hearing some ideas from the opposition and their new leader in the coming months. After 36 years I have learned in politics it's easy to criticize. The hard part is coming up with good ideas and putting them forward.

In times like this New Brunswickers want and deserve good ideas and solutions to our challenges. That's what this government will provide which is why it gives me great pleasure to second the motion for acceptance of the speech from the throne.