

whose tactics since the Budget have been almost exclusively designed to scare senior citizens in the country. The reliance on scare tactics by this Party is not new. Last fall when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) introduced his economic statement, that Party tried to scare the unemployed by suggesting that the measures in the economic statement would reduce employment in the country by 50,000 to 100,000 persons. Everyone in the Chamber knows that those statements and innuendoes did not work. Today we are seeing the most rapid increase in job creation recorded in the history of the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCrossan:** The Party is hypocritical in its criticism because it raised the possibility that within the next five years, if nothing else changes, we may see an increase of 200,000 in the number of people living in poverty. That is hypocritical because under that Party's Government in the last five years we saw an actual increase by 400,000 in the number of Canadians living below the poverty line. They did not say a single word. They allowed that situation to develop. They cut OAS by more and did not tackle the basic problem of poverty among seniors in the country as it relates to pension reform.

Those problems are well known and are not new. The problems with our public and private pension systems were identified by the Conservative Government when the present Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) announced a national pension conference in 1979. The Liberal Minister of National Health and Welfare confirmed over five years ago that we had serious problems with our pension system, and particularly with benefits for single women over the age of 65. That Party knew for five years that we had serious problems with poverty among the elderly in the country, but it did nothing whatsoever other than delay.

● (1220)

When the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) raises his heartfelt pleas for the poor in this country who are receiving GIS, he knows full well that the NDP Government in Manitoba systematically increases the charge-backs to the poorest in Manitoba for the rent supplements. Every time the GIS is increased, the NDP Government of Manitoba reduces the net income of seniors in Manitoba. That is what his Party is doing to protect the elderly in this country.

The Liberal Party is hypocritical because it tries to extrapolate one section of the Budget for five years and literally scare our elderly. Where were the Liberals when these problems developed? Where were they when women over 65 years of age gradually fell further below the poverty line? Where were they when widows below 65 faced increasing difficulties? Where were those Members when the OAS was cut as a result of the six and five program? They were silent and did nothing about the basic problems.

This is not the only example of the hypocrisy shown by the Liberal Party Members in this Parliament. When the unemployment statistics were released, they stood up month after

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month to complain that unemployment of 10.5 per cent was unacceptable in this country. They might have had some credibility if any one of them ever stood up to suggest that there was a problem in this country when unemployment was running at 12 per cent. However, they stayed silent. That is why I say that their actions now and then prove just how hypocritical they are.

Where were they in 1980 when the National Energy Program literally destroyed the energy sector in our country? They were silent again. Where were they during the last four years when poverty among our seniors rose by 400,000? It rose steadily, year after year, under their Government. They were silent.

A more recent example of their hypocrisy concerns interest rates. Last February when interest rates rose for two weeks, after a steady decline for four or five months, the Liberals were standing in the House trying to scare homeowners. They were saying that homeowners would lose again because interest rates were rising. Long-term interest rates are at a seven-year low, but the Liberals have been silent since that time. They did not protest the high level of interest rates when mortgages hit 22 per cent in 1982.

As a result of their bankrupt policies, the Liberals had no other policy than to leave the country close to economic ruin. The only tactic available to them now is to try to scare Canadians, whether it is our unemployed, our homeowners or our senior citizens.

The Progressive Conservative Party was elected to repair the damage caused by the Party which has proposed the motion today. Liberals should remember that it was one of their Prime Ministers, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who predicted that the 20th century belonged to Canada. There are 15 years left in the 20th century and I believe that we can develop the policies necessary to make the 20th century belong to Canada, rather than allow Canada to become a second rate nation as we did under the economic policies of the Liberal Party. We will do this by restoring prosperity, step by step, as we have been doing.

Our fall economic statement attempted to take stock of our country's situation and provide long-term projections of our goals. While we projected what would happen with such things as employment, the only tactic used by the Liberals was to scare people.

Second, we attempted to analyse objectively why the recovery in the United States had been so much more dynamic than the recovery in Canada. There are many similarities between the Canadian and the American economies. In both countries, for example, the automobile sector led the recovery. In both countries, the smokestack industries such as steel and textiles have not recovered.

However, there was a big difference between the economic recoveries in both countries. The energy sector in Canada was devastated while this did not take place in the United States. While the small business sector in both countries was almost the sole creator of jobs, that sector in the United States was