

courage to change one iota in the direction in which it had been going.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That will be all for questions and comments. I recognize the Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong).

[*English*]

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, like all other Hon. Members of the House, I wish to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your appointment as Acting Speaker. I know that you will fulfil that position with honour, grace and fairness to all Hon. Members of the House. My personal congratulations to you, Sir. My congratulations as well to our new Government. Certainly, it received a very impressive mandate during the last federal election. There are many new Hon. Members in the House, as well as some older Hon. Members, and on a personal level, we wish them well.

There was no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the message which the people of Canada gave during the last federal election was very clear. They were tired of the type of runaround they had received from the previous Liberal administration. I believe they were tired of double talk and mismanagement. Over-all, there was a sense that we had a Government in Ottawa which was essentially a Government of crisis management, a Government that did not know what to do nor did it have any idea of where to lead the country. The people of Canada on election day felt that a major change was needed. Even though this new Government has only been in power for less than three months, we are still anxiously awaiting that new direction.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, after listening to the Speech from the Throne and to the economic statement, that what we are experiencing is just a continuation of the old, perhaps accelerated a little bit. There is no doubt that we are living in very difficult times. There are tremendous social, economic and technological changes. There is a general sense of insecurity in the land. Young people do not know the type of future with which they will be faced. Workers today do not know whether the job they are doing will be around a year or two years from now. Older folks who are on the verge of retiring are not certain whether their pensions or meagre savings will suffice to provide for decent shelter and food in the coming years. There is a tremendous sense of insecurity. There is also a sense that the traditional solutions and answers will not solve the problem which most of the world is facing today.

Let us look at some contradictions, Mr. Speaker. We have high unemployment, a high deficit, and at the same time, generally, over the last number of years, cut-backs in government services. In terms of traditional economics, Mr. Speaker, that just does not make sense. Generally, during periods when there are deficits, it means the Government is injecting more money into the economy in order to generate more economic activity and growth. Therefore, you should not have unemployment. However, we have deficits and unemployment occurring

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at the same time. Normally, one does not have cut-backs in government services and programs and deficits at the same time. But again, Mr. Speaker, we find that we are receiving from the Tory Government what we received from the previous Liberal Government, ongoing cut-backs to government programs while, in fact, the deficit has increased. Something just does not make sense, Mr. Speaker.

There is no doubt that cutting the deficit is an important item which must be addressed. I understand that between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of public revenues—in other words, the moneys which Government takes in in terms of taxes, fees and so forth—goes to pay off our debt. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable. Any person trying to balance his books at home knows that one cannot operate a household when one has to pay out 30 per cent of one's income to pay off past debts. No person can live that way and no country, either.

The types of solutions we have been hearing from Hon. Members of the Government just do not make sense to us. They have trotted out the slogan that Canadians are living beyond their means, that government programs and expenditures, particularly in the social area, are bloated. They say "We have been too good to the Canadian people. There are too many of these rich social welfare programs". But, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the programs we have in Canada and compare them with the programs in most western European countries, we come off pretty badly in that comparison. There are countries in western Europe, Mr. Speaker, with a fraction of the resources we have, which are able to offer their old people, their unemployed and disabled, much better economic security. So when I hear the slogans that we have been living beyond our means, all I can say, Mr. Speaker, is, that is hogwash.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the reason we have this high deficit is that Governments have not been collecting the revenue they should have. It is not that we have been overspending but we have not been collecting the revenues which should be going into the public coffers. Look at the figures, Mr. Speaker, which show that we have some \$18 billion in corporate tax loopholes. That is \$18 billion which normally should have gone into the public coffers but which have not because of tax breaks. The banks of this country pay less taxes than all of the clerks who work for them. Look at all of the uncollected taxes.

● (1750)

The Government did make an attempt in the financial statement to collect some of the revenue. It hopes to collect some \$400 million of the \$4.5 billion that everyone agrees is owed to the Government. Approximately \$1.6 billion of the uncollected taxes are owed by the corporate sector. I would suggest that a fair number of those corporations are large multinational corporations which have not paid the taxes which they and the Government both agree are owed to the public purse. Yet the Government is content to collect only \$400 million of these taxes. That just does not make sense to me, Mr. Speaker. If we are going to balance our books in the country, which is important to do, we must look at the revenue