

*Increased Cost of Living*

damaged his own case by introducing a motion which completely ignores the very significant achievements of parliament and the government in the past three and a half years. While the present administration is quite within its rights to claim justifiably that these achievements are largely the result of initiatives and policies introduced by the government, nevertheless they are, in a large part, measures and policies which have received support from both sides of the house. I deplore the insidious campaign, aided and abetted by the New Democratic Party, which challenges the institution of parliament. This kind of malignant propaganda can serve no useful purpose in helping to build parliament into a greater and more effective institution. In democratic societies there is always room for constructive and useful criticism. Indeed, democracy thrives on intelligent and constructive debate. Flamboyant demagogues, masters of half-truths and those who take liberty with facts are the primary enemies of democracy.

The leader of the New Democratic Party, in playing the familiar role of a parliamentary god, demands that there be a better distribution of national income in Canada on economic and humanitarian grounds. This is a goal toward which all of us strive. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, how will this laudable goal be achieved? I suggest it will take more than romantic flights of oratory; it will take considerable intelligence and well thought out programs; it will take a determination to plan programs and policies which will achieve desirable results.

We may ask ourselves, what was the record of the present administration and of parliament in the past three and a half years. I suggest that the record is quite clear; it is there for all to see. Unfortunately, we have been experiencing a certain phenomenon in Canada in the past three and a half years. We are learning to live with controversy and healthy debate in parliament, and this debate, sometimes on the less important issues, has often been deliberately used to obscure the major accomplishments of the government and—and this is very important—to give a false impression of what is parliament's job.

• (3:30 p.m.)

Too many people in Canada—a country without a revolutionary tradition and without the great tradition of debate and controversy—are led to believe that somehow parliament should become more compatible with the age of automation and that, in fact, it should be filled by robots. However, I suggest

to you that in contrast with the fields of science and technology those who are dealing with human resources and human affairs must carry on a healthy, controversial and democratic debate. I deplore tactics, both in the House of Commons and elsewhere, by those who do not have a true and mature understanding of democracy to discredit our institutions. The flamboyant and unrealistic speech, which I think represents the zenith even for the leader of the New Democratic Party, was aimed not so much at debating the issues before parliament as at discrediting the institution of parliament. These tactics have been used before in other countries. Let us hope that as we try to uphold a more mature democracy in this country we will recognize the difference between the approach which presumes *ab initio* that all our past is for naught, one that does not recognize that our politics are in the process of evolution, and one that does not recognize that in that context we must be cognizant of the real issues and real facts.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that being the leader of a minority group in this house is not to be interpreted as a licence to be irresponsible. I am not suggesting, that all the members of the New Democratic Party or of any other party are irresponsible at all times. Indeed, many of us on many occasions have had the pleasure of listening to some very responsible speeches from all quarters of the house, and some of the criticisms which have been made of the administration or of parliament have indeed been valid. But I think there is one basic difference between that criticism and the approach taken last evening by the leader of the New Democratic Party. They recognize the context in which we are operating. They are realistic. They are able to bring idealism to temper the realities of time.

By introducing the word "idealism" I am not suggesting for one moment that the speech of the leader of the New Democratic Party last night was itself idealistic. It was almost the antithesis of idealism. Someone has just asked me what the antithesis of idealism is. It is the motion introduced in the House of Commons yesterday by the leader of the New Democratic Party.

I mentioned last evening the record of accomplishments on the part of this government during the last three and a half years. I pointed to the 80,000 new jobs which have been created in the Atlantic provinces, largely during the last five years. But this is not to say that there are not still too many people today