

● (1530)

This Liberal-Conservative view of the world which holds corporate economic decision-making to be sacrosanct, is one which we in the New Democratic Party do tally reject. We call on all hard-working Canadians to reject it as well for the benefit of the country and those who will come after us so that some day Canadians will be able to stand up with appropriate pride and dignity as a society which does not depend for its stability on decisions taken in secret in corporate boardrooms in other countries, but rather as a society which is self-reliant and in control of a national economic destiny that is in harmony with the need for global justice and environmental responsibility for the future and for the planet.

You see, the Conservatives are right in a way. That is often the case with the Conservatives. They have a little pinch of the truth. They argue that if you redistribute wealth without paying any attention to how you generate that wealth, at some point you may have no wealth to distribute, if I understand their argument correctly, and I think I do.

They argue that we have reached that point in Canada. I argue the contrary, that this is only true in the sense that those who own the productive capacity in this country and in other countries are now refusing to share what they have. They have in a sense gone on strike against the welfare state and the kind of society that we have built up in Canada over the last 30 years.

The fact that all studies indicate that the gap between the rich and the poor has not been closed by the welfare state but indeed may have been widened does not bother them. They do not like the truth to interfere with their theories. They maintain we have reached a point where people will no longer have incentives to generate the wealth which then can be redistributed.

During a recession in particular they seem to be of the opinion that the standard of living of the affluent must be preserved at all costs and that the affluent cannot and indeed will not pay more taxes in order to make sure that the less well off are not hurt.

This is called, in the parlance of the Liberal and Conservative Parties, a good investment climate. I call it nothing but sheer, unadulterated selfishness and greed. That is what good investment climate means to me. Providing a good investment climate also means catering to the profit margins of the multinationals and other corporations when it comes to environmental protection, occupational health and safety, and other areas as well.

Thus, it is not only for reasons of social justice, both during a recession and indeed after a recession, that investment decisions affecting our economy must be brought before the bar of the public interest, but also for the reason that we must make economic and technological decisions accountable for the impact that such decisions have on employment, on the environment, on human relations, on the community and on the prospect for global justice. All investment decisions must be brought before the bar of this kind of criteria. At present they are not. They are operating in a moral vacuum where they do whatever the hell they please. That kind of thing has to

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end. Yet, this is the conceptual and moral leap which neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives are prepared, willing or able to make.

In terms of redistribution of wealth, the Liberals are in an increasingly untenable position. All those many well-intentioned Canadians who supported the Liberals over the years because they believed that the Liberal Party really wanted to redistribute wealth will soon have to choose. They will have to accept the Conservative argument that we have reached the limit of our ability to share while generating wealth in the traditional way and must, therefore, retreat from the welfare state, or, they have to accept the NDP argument. We argue that because what the Conservatives say is true in a sense, we must go beyond the welfare state and its many inadequacies by using a combination of various forms of public ownership, public control of investment dollars and fair taxation to make our economy serve the common good and to generate the kind of wealth that would be to the benefit of all Canadians, not just materially but socially as well.

That is the choice that will be faced in the eighties, and I am sincere when I say that well-intentioned Canadians who supported the Liberal Party thought we could have it both ways in Canada, that somehow the Liberal Party could go on forever being a party of social reform and at the same time a party that was loyal to the traditional economic system.

That could happen as long as there was lots of money to throw around. Now there is not the money to throw around and the Liberal Party has had to choose which way to go. I say the Liberal Party has already chosen. There are plenty of Members opposite who will not admit that. They do not want to hear the truth. They do not want to know they have died the moral death which they have died over the last few years. Those with something still left in them will realize that. Plenty of voters will realize that. They will realize that, even if the Liberal Party is not willing to realize it. For, as I have said, the Liberals chose to abandon social justice when it came to the crunch.

Now, Mr. Speaker, more than ever is the time for a co-operative Commonwealth that the founders of CCF and NDP dreamed of, in which true human community and real individual freedom would grow together as the competitive self-seeking of individuals, corporations, governments and nations, characteristic of the present order, is replaced with the structures and not just the rhetoric of equality, co-operation, justice and peace.

It will not be easy. We realize that a future in which a just social and economic order that meets the needs of all, within the limits of our responsibility for a healthy environment and to future generations, will be difficult to achieve. Minds and hearts will have to be changed as well as economic structures and material conditions, but there is no other choice. Otherwise, both domestically and internationally we will descend into the slime that the Prime Minister wallowed in on television in his three addresses last week when he was talking about