

Economic Conditions

Looking at the same study, frustrations are often taken out on children, those who are defenceless. This again is the result of an economic climate, a result of economic situations affecting people.

I could quote all sorts of statistics about costs of mortgages and the rising costs of food, but I am more concerned about the increasing humility of people. We must see the government act. We need to see members of the opposition to the government come into the House and listen to these debates. Because members on the other side do not come, they do not care. As a result they do not understand. It is nice to believe you must listen to cabinet colleagues and vote with them, but government members also have another responsibility. That responsibility is to convince the cabinet, to convince the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, to convince the Minister of Employment and Immigration, to convince the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and to convince the Prime Minister that we must do something for Canadians, that we cannot just play follow-the-leader with the American economy. If those government members are not in this House they are not listening, and they are not capable of acting with their cabinet ministers.

Our leader and our finance critic have offered our proposed solution. We have offered our assistance in trying to convince the government that there are things we can do in Canada. We have talked about tax credits for low-income Canadians. This would not only be of benefit to those individuals I have talked about earlier, but also of benefit to all Canadians by getting cash flowing in our economy among those Canadians who need more jobs. We have talked about a national economic strategy. We have talked about energy strategies for northerners. In this way northerners could afford to earn a living, paying for their heating costs.

We have talked about regional development strategy, and we have talked about building a merchant marine in Canada. We have talked about all those things in this economic strategy which we have emphasized for the last three or four years, yet the government says it is not responsible and it does not know what is going on. It says to the opposition that it does not know what is going on, it never gives advice, it just criticizes. I would suggest to the Minister of Finance and others in that part of the House that they show some feelings toward all Canadians. What is lacking on that side of the House is an understanding of the problem. They also lack the political role and the political conviction to do something about the problems we face.

We have a national energy policy which is not only dividing Canadians but is basically the package of glitter the Liberals have presented on each and every occasion.

We have a problem in respect of unemployment. The government has created a program. That program does not work, along with 13 or 14 other programs. They really do not come up with a solution.

We have a problem with foreign investment in this country. The government has set up a Foreign Investment Review

Agency but does not give it any teeth. It is really a laughing stock.

During the last election the government promised to strengthen the role of that board or agency. Since then it has done nothing. The government has talked about training and employment programs. All we have seen is more ad hockery for which the Liberal government is so famous.

When it comes to interest rates the Liberal party made certain promises, but what did we receive? We have received what some people would call the "Thursday abdication". What that means is that the government has said let the mortgage industry decide, and every Thursday the Bank of Canada does something with treasury notes, and every Thursday the interest rate goes up, and every Thursday somebody asks the Minister of Finance a question and he says, "That is not my responsibility, that is the responsibility of governor Bouey." This amounts to Liberal abdication of responsibility, whether it applies to interest rates, the lack of jobs, or concern for humanity. This is the result of a very sick nation.

It is time the government stopped abdicating its leadership. It is time the government took upon itself its economic, political, and social responsibilities. That is what this debate is all about. This does not involve the matter of whether one is Liberal, Conservative or New Democrat; it is a matter of the economic and social future of the country.

I started my speech by saying we are not here for a free ride, and we are not. We, as members of Parliament, have a duty and an obligation to speak our minds, to do our research, and do what we can to the benefit not only of ourselves but of those who are less fortunate and of those who follow us. So long as the ministers do not come and listen, so long as members opposite do not come and listen, we are fighting an uphill battle.

This is a battle we are willing to fight again and again, and again and again, until we do solve some of these problems and until we do get the government to realize that there is an economic and social crisis in Canada. That is a battle worth fighting and I do not mind staying up all night, as I am sure other hon. members feel, to fight this battle. We will do it again, Mr. Speaker.

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Given the fact that this is the fifteenth hour, coming up, of this debate, I want to talk about the economic impact of the budget measures and economic policies being pursued by the government. I want to talk about the effect of the economic policy of the government on average Canadians. Possibly I should explain that it is necessary to talk about economic impact at this time because clearly the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) does not understand what his policies are doing to people. Economic impact is what happens when you transpose numbers and budget projections and transpose those results to the lives of ordinary Canadians, and how this affects the day to day activities of Canadians and their hopes for the future.