

The Address—Mr. Broadbent

that the problems should be solved, but provision for solutions ought to be started. What are some of the problems?

[*Translation*]

Unemployment: one out of every eight Canadians has been without a job for the past two years. Among our young people, 18 per cent are unemployed. Poverty: 4.3 million Canadians are now living below the poverty line. Moreover, most of our single-parent families whose head is a woman are also living below the poverty line.

The tax system: it has become increasingly unfair. Over the past 10 years, the number of Canadians whose income exceeds \$50,000 per year and who are paying absolutely no income tax has increased from 300 to over 8,000.

[*English*]

Add to these particular problems, that are very real, the problems of our farmers. During the past decade, year in and year out, farmers have had a decline in their real income. Add to that the problems which are becoming increasingly evident for men, and particularly women, who are faced with technological change. One can see that any government coming to power in Canada at this particular moment, whatever its ideological stripe, has its problems set out.

Canadians voted for change. I sincerely congratulate the Prime Minister and his Party. They won one of the great political victories in the history of our country and they deserve to be commended for getting the democratic support of the majority of our people. Having received that support, and having obtained a mandate for change, leadership of a very high order is required, leadership which will indeed begin to address the problems and do so from within the framework of the changes which were promised in the election campaign. The people of Canada are looking for change which will be compassionate, serious and which will provide a greater opportunity for Canadians, young and old, men and women.

If we begin to assess the Throne Speech—and I think in this debate we should spend a little time on that—and if we look at the speech in terms of providing change, what do we find? First, we must consider the stated goals and look at what is found in this Throne Speech as compared with previous Throne Speeches provided by the Liberal Government.

In this speech we find a commitment to “national reconciliation”. That is a replacement for the Liberal wording which covered the same objective. The Liberals preferred to offer a “new era of federal-provincial consultation”.

On the subject of social justice, we heard a commitment to “value and support the comprehensive social security system”, instead of the Liberal words of “strengthening the safety net”. Perhaps that expression is a little less elegant, but it is the same goal.

On the question of economic renewal, instead of Liberal talk about a “critical national objective”, the Conservatives give us a “critical national challenge”. Having listened to the Throne Speech, I was not at all surprised to hear on the news that evening the finance critic for the Liberal Party saying that the

Conservative Throne Speech could have been written by a Liberal. I would make a small correction to that statement—it was written by a Liberal.

If there is nothing new in terms of the stated objectives of this Government, if it is essentially a reformulation using new buzz words and new concepts of goals which were provided by the previous Liberal government, I would say right away that the New Democratic Party supports the same goals. I would also say that when the day comes—and I believe it will come—that the New Democratic Party will write a Throne Speech for the people of Canada, and if we talk about the same laudable goals, we will use new terminology. My concern is not with the spurious battle of words. I would rather get on with what I regard to be the essence of such a debate and the essence of such a Throne Speech. It is not over that type of matter that I feel we should be having disputes. My concerns are a little different.

My concern is not about the general goals, which I have said are quite laudable; my concerns are with specifics. The specifics, such as they were in the Throne Speech, almost without exception, were the unfulfilled specifics of the old Liberal agenda. I will not document that case. However, I believe any journalist—and there are a number of journalists who actually do their homework—looking through the list of specific Throne Speech commitments provided by the new so-called Conservative Government would find very quickly that the specific commitments which relate to some of these goals are, by and large, on the unfulfilled agenda of the past Parliament.

● (1640)

I want to add right away, Mr. Speaker, that many of those particular specific commitments we would support as well. However, I raise this point for the consideration of the people of Canada, those men and women who are regarding this debate as it takes place in the House of Commons, those men and women in Atlantic Canada—

[*Translation*]

—in the fine province of Quebec, in the province of Ontario and in Western Canada who have voted for a change.

[*English*]

I have a simple question: where is the change? Where is the change, Mr. Speaker? Where is the new beginning we were promised?

With respect to the Throne Speech, what really does concern me is not simply the absence of the specifics, and I will come back to some of those in a moment, but what is the economic philosophy which permeates the Throne Speech. The political agenda of this Government began to be set out pretty clearly shortly after September 4 in statements made by the Prime Minister from Meech Lake, by statements made by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Beatty), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), and other Ministers of the Crown. It is perhaps best illustrated by a phrase from the Throne Speech