

ence of this kind of indexation gives the government some real motive to fight inflation. This is better than the sort of public relations exercises in which it keeps indulging. We want the government to eliminate inflation and have asked it to reduce inflation, rather than horse around, as it has for years, and then hit those least able to bear it. We need much more evidence of economy and efficiency in government operations before we will agree that there are not substantial expenditures of a much lower priority than family allowances.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Indeed, far from giving us that evidence this evening, the President of the Treasury Board has appeared before the House and pretended that there is no possibility of waste. Indeed he indicated that the Auditor General is somewhere away out in left field. Who can believe that?

I view the government's announcement equally in sorrow and anger, and view the government's record equally with incredulity and disgust. It is hard to believe that, given the resources of this country and the resourcefulness of its people, any government could have made so large a mess in so short a time. I say to the President of the Treasury Board and the Prime Minister through you, Sir, that it will be something for Canadians never to forget when the bill is paid.

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, in the election campaign of 1974 the Liberal party based its claim to economic leadership on two pillars. One of those was the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) campaign against the issue of wage and price controls raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield). That was the first pillar of their campaign. The Liberals then said they would have nothing to do with it. Yet on Thanksgiving Eve that first pillar came down. The Liberals said they were wrong in the campaign. We did not think they were right, but they did a 180 degree about-face and agreed with the Leader of the Opposition.

Their second pillar in the 1974 campaign consisted of all the spending they were to do. For instance, they were to spend money for housing, and make sure, through public financing if necessary, that money was spent to ensure that Canadians owned Canadian resources. They were to spend money on the east coast on the fisheries; you name it, as the Leader of the Opposition said earlier, they would spend money on it. They were to spend money all over the place, to improve, presumably, the well being of all Canadians.

This evening that second pillar came down. I suggest that never before in recent political history, at least since the depression, has any political party abandoned its central claims to political and economic leadership as completely as has the present Liberal party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: And all the time it has acted with what one may call arrogant Liberal condescension. When the opposition, my party, or Creditiste members criticize the government, we see those on the other side smiling.

An hon. Member: It is more a smirk.

Anti-Inflation Program

Mr. Broadbent: It is a smile of condescension which seems to say, "You fellows really don't know what this is all about." Of course we know what lies behind that smile, and I say this seriously. It is simply political cynicism. It simply means that the party knows how to manipulate public opinion, as it has demonstrated in elections. The party has a capacity, unrivalled by any other party of any country in the western world, to gauge the sense or the mood of the people at any given time. Abandoning moral commitments or serious political judgment, it will lay it on thick and tell the electorate everything it seems to want to hear, at any given time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Just as this criticism applies, in my judgment, to their 1974 election campaign, so it applies to the program they announced tonight. They sense that there is a mood in the field of federal as well as provincial politics favouring a cut in government spending, and they are going to cut back. This will be a complete about face on their 1974 campaign promises.

We, of the New Democratic Party, agree that wasteful spending is bad and that bad programs should be scrapped. We agree that the salaries of over-paid members of parliament and civil servants should be curtailed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: These are all laudable objectives with which all reasonable people, I suggest, are in accord. I do not think any political party or particular section of the population will disagree with me. I suggest this is beyond dispute.

We agree with certain changes announced this evening. For years we have talked about foolish spending on programs like PAIT, PIP, IRDIA and others which have been defended by various ministers of finance and ministers of industry, trade and commerce. Finally, the government will do something it ought to have done years ago. Information Canada is to go. It ought to have gone some time ago.

We agree to cutbacks in the salaries of over-paid civil servants in the federal bureaucracy, of members of this House and the other place, and of judges of high court. These are acceptable. But the New Democratic Party does not accept the view that Canada requires a holus-bolus, across-the-board cut by the federal government in virtually every department. We categorically reject that view. Such an indiscriminate cutback affects not only bad spending and unnecessary programs, but also good spending and necessary programs. In short, indiscriminate cutbacks in federal or provincial spending are unacceptable and, I argue, have no place in the policy of any who believe in a civilized society.

Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that real cutbacks are involved in the government announcement. This is not a spurious, superficial game. Unfortunately there are to be serious cutbacks in programs right across the spectrum of federal responsibility. What does this mean? It means that the poor regions of Canada, I am tempted to include all parts east of the Ottawa River, will be adversely affected by the cutback in the spending of the