

Economic Conditions

whenever there is a choice between the national interest and the interests of the Liberal Party of Canada. The party wins hands down.

The Prime Minister, who casts doubts about the calibre of citizenship of those Canadians who disagree with his vision of a new Canada, asks westerners who feel alienated what kind of Canadians they are. He says they are hysterical and selfish. We do not have to use those labels for the western Canadians I know. It was western Canadians who in the election in February rebuked the Liberal appeal to vote not in the national interest but to vote against 18 cents because "that would hurt people personally". That was the inference. The real message of that campaign was that we do not have to make sacrifices to live in Canada and that we need only look after ourselves. Western Canadians turned away from that appeal to selfishness and, by rebuking that appeal, we demonstrated our loyalty to Canada. This is our nation and we care deeply for Canada.

Citizens in Okanagan-Similkameen are not selfish Canadians. Their concerns are not parochial. Sure, they worry about jobs. They suffer through inflation. They are damaged by high interest rates. Young people there want to own their own homes, and older people retiring to the Okanagan want security and comfort in their declining years.

They worry about health care, retirement centres and public transit. Fruit growers and cattle ranchers trying to cope with increasing costs of land, equipment, supplies and labour are being damaged by the cost of borrowing money and by the disadvantage of living at the extremity of Canada 3,000 miles from the major population market. The citizens of Okanagan-Similkameen face the problems faced by people right across Canada.

● (0940)

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, what their greatest concern is? It is about Canada, the future of our nation, the anxiety imposed upon them by the government in Ottawa which plays province against province, area against area, people against people, a damaging game of power politics which threatens to tear our nation apart.

Canada is the preoccupation of the people in Okanagan-Similkameen. We have a budget which fails to address the national dilemma, an energy non-policy which seeks to put the major burden on one area and the one group of people who happen to have minority representation in Ottawa. It is for the benefit of the more populated areas of Canada which control the political system. We have a government in place which is more concerned with power than with the national well-being. We have a spending regime which has as its standard waste and a preoccupation with unproductive activities, a record of deficit spending year after year which has left our nation hostage to every economic and financial ill wind which blows in the international climate. It is this irresponsible wasting of our Canadian product which explains why our nation cannot maintain an interest rate that is independent of the United States. This government's economic package, if it has one, is a

total preoccupation with one national problem only, namely, inflation. We hear the phony response over and over again "we cannot do that", "we cannot do the other", or "we cannot do this". Why? "Because inflation will result". I say that Canadians are prepared to sacrifice for the nation's well-being. I think the government underestimates them. In my estimation Canadians would be even prepared to accept an additional personal hardship if we were creating something positive in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. King: The problem is that we have the hardship of inflation, we have the hardship of high interest rates, we have immense deficit spending, we have wasteful habits, we have an arrogant disregard of common, decent, honest politics, and we are not in the process of creating national values, either in material or in national good will. We are defeating both those purposes.

I quote from *The Citizen*, which is not exactly noted for being an opposition supporter:

The interest rate policy for which Finance Minister Allan MacEachen is making no apology will do much more damage than good to the economy. MacEachen finally acknowledged last week what everyone knew ever since the Bank of Canada began tracking the American interest rate fluctuations—that Canada's monetary, and so-called anti-inflation policy, is being set in the U.S.

Curtailling inflation, achieving energy and food self-sufficiency, building a sound industrial base—all of these objectives are being sacrificed by the do-nothing federal government. The course of its policies will force on Canada a further debased currency, higher inflation and lost economic rewards.

So says the Ottawa *Citizen*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, someone said "at last", and certainly many members, as well as the *Hansard* reporters and the translators, would like to say "at last". But it is at last my chance to participate in the debate, and the chance for many other members who, because of the importance of the subject matter, will want to add their thoughts to this discussion.

What is truly amazing in this whole debate, which started at eight o'clock last night and which has lasted until now, at quarter to ten on Friday morning—whether that is the Friday of the parliamentary day will, I suppose, be settled later—a debate which has lasted now thirteen and a half hours and some minutes, what is truly shocking and what concerns me and other members who have sat here during the night—there were some good contributions from backbenchers on the government side earlier in the evening—is that since 1.30 a.m. there has not been one member of the cabinet present in the House during a debate which affects the pocketbooks, the lives and the futures of Canadians from coast to coast.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: That in itself should bring condemnation to this government which sits casually by hoping that the Christmas spirit will let them off the hook, after having deceived Canadians last year in a most dishonest election campaign.