

Taxation

just as the New Democratic Party has supported the government vote after vote after vote.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): This is why the Liberals lost in Saskatchewan. This is why they are down to a corporal's guard in Saskatchewan. They do not like common-law marriages in Saskatchewan. This is why, this is why.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): What did the Prime Minister and this planning and priorities committee, that great mystery group of the Liberal cabinet, do up in Meach Lake on the weekend? They might as well have drilled a hole in the ice and fished. The Secretary of State (Mr. Regan) was the spokesman for the government. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) spoke for the government. It was not the Minister of Finance who spoke for the government. It was not the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Bussi eres) who spoke for the government. It was not even the Prime Minister who spoke for the government. They sent the Secretary of State. What did he say?

Mr. Epp: Not much.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): First of all he has no credit to say anything about the economy; he almost wrecked the economy of Nova Scotia when he was there as premier. What did he say? He said that there would be no change in their policy. Hon. members on the back benches of the Liberal Party and the ten members who sent the courageous letter to the Minister of Finance should remember that there will be no change. The Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan), wherever he might be, should remember that there will be no change in economic policy. I will tell them why they should remember it. It is because the people of Canada will not forget. Small businessmen in central Canada, in western Canada and in eastern Canada will not forget. They will learn how to curse the government in both official languages for its economic policy.

Mr. Nielsen: And a few others too.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): And a few others as well. I travel in my riding to speak with the farmers there. For the first time farms, which have been in the same families for four and five generations, farms with centennial signs on them that have been there since Confederation, are having a tough time. They cannot operate, build or grow, if there is not money at reasonable rates; they cannot buy equipment or compete with others. What does the small businessman or woman say—the entrepreneur, the cutting edge of employment opportunities, investment, development and building? If he were able to stand here and speak for himself, he would say to you, Mr. Speaker, and all members that this government is bankrupt in ideas. He said to me, "Surely with all the promises that it made about getting its economic house together it cannot stand and let this happen to me and let me lose my investment." That is what is happening. Every time the

slippery Minister of Finance oils his way through that fog and fails to answer a question in the House of Commons, it is another nail in the Liberals' coffin.

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I want to say to those Liberal backbenchers that there is a limit to the amount of snake oil which will be bought by the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Canadians have had their fill of snake oil. In February of 1980, the Liberals were elected to office on a number of promises. The Liberals said, "Elect us and we will keep the oil and gas prices down." The member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) who is now the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, was denuded of a great deal of his power for good reason. He said that if interest rates went above the rate that they were at that time—13 per cent, I believe—and he was minister, he would resign. Well, he still sits there.

The Liberals said to trust them and not to believe the budget which was introduced by the then minister of finance, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie). The Liberals told Canadians not to believe what the Conservatives had to say about the tax credit for the high and rising cost of fuel. They said not to believe the Conservatives when they proposed to bring in property tax legislation to help home owners. They urged Canadians to support them in their filibuster of that Conservative legislation. They travelled throughout the country telling Canadians this.

Interest rates have risen from 13 per cent to 19 per cent today and in some areas it has gone to 24 per cent. Interest rates go through the roof if you try to secure secondary financing. That is the economic situation today, and it is a challenge to any government which really cares, but this government is beyond caring. This government is beyond seeing and beyond credibility. In fact, this government is incredible. It has no right to govern a country like this.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): If you want to hear about economic matters in this debate, I will tell you about economic matters because I live with those taxpayers. I go to my riding. I do not hide out at Meach Lake. I feel for the farmers and small-business men. I visit the apartment buildings in Bayshore and Parkwood Hills in my riding and see how rents are going up and up for people who would only like a choice in housing but do not have that choice.

I ask those Liberal backbenchers, "When will you stand up and speak for the people who sent you here? Why do you not stand up for the Canadians who voted for you in good faith? They did that in other parts of Canada. Why are you so blind, stupid and voiceless in the House of Commons?" Those are questions I must ask them. I realize it is difficult for them but every so often they must put cabinet opportunities behind them