

Mr. Speaker, we need only look around us to realize that this article was not written for another time or another planet. There again, it is high time the government assumed its responsibilities in a spirit of justice and honesty and also set the example.

Where is the just society that was so much talked about a few years ago? Where is the just society the qualities of which were posted on almost every street corner? Where can we find in 1975 the justice, the equity, the sharing of resources and the well-directed and well-used prosperity we were promised?

When we look around us, what we see is not quite, I would say not at all, like those promises. We see only strikes, increasing unemployment, a mockery of justice, poverty, concerned citizens, a very unstable business world, spiralling inflation, and so on. It would not be fair to say that the government is responsible for all this, but it would certainly be fair enough to say it had something to do with it.

Cure-alls which can cure every ill at once do not exist, but there are some measures which could give positive results even in the short run. Because of the serious problems now facing the country and the bleak future in store for us if one and everyone fail to do their full share to remedy the situation, it is urgent that the government inform the people, business, labour and the various groups of that threat and assign duties to everyone. It is not a matter of frightening anybody but rather of waking up the people so that they will become aware of their responsibilities in that common undertaking. It would certainly be better to tell the whole truth on the present state of affairs. In any case, nobody will prevent reality from being what it is—

On the other hand, there is another area where the government has failed to act and where it should take steps as soon as possible and that is the area of importation and exportation. In recent weeks, I have repeatedly raised the problem in this House; the failure to restrict the present flow of imports endangers some of our large industries such as footwear and textile. Too many imports are allowed and our Canadian producers must slow down their operations or dismiss workers. We had a somewhat similar problem with powdered milk and cheese. The government must at any cost protect our people—I mean the Canadian people—and recognize as a principle of urgency that we must absolutely tend to produce in this country the consumer goods which we need after that we can always import some if there is any shortage, but not before that. As a middle term objective, we should try to increase the production of some commodities which could even be exported.

On the other hand, in the area of social security, we should set up as soon as possible a minimum guaranteed income plan to provide Canadians with a certain amount of security, while reducing the financial burden resulting from several measures of direct or indirect support which are administrative monsters rather than effective measures.

With regard to the working population, which is disturbed by so many conflicts, and all sorts of upheavals and unrest that affect workers and employers alike, there is an urgent need for reviewing the rules of the game. In this

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regard, the government should immediately implement our proposal to promote the possibility for workers to participate in the share capital of companies, in order that the problems of production, profits, and work security become common to both parties. Then they would, to a greater extent, speak the same language, and share the same goals. Several conflicts could then be avoided and the workers would have greater motivation. The workers, at least wherever this proposal could apply, would know greater stability, which is badly needed.

Those are only a few of the solutions which could apply over the short term, and produce positive and swift results. I do not intend to go on further along this line; my colleagues can easily complete the picture. Still, what I want to stress, above everything else, is that this matter requires leadership on the part of the government; they must assume their responsibilities and set an example of integrity and determination in attempting to solve justly the social and economic problem that prevails in this country. The government must absolutely restore the confidence of all Canadians and have them participate in the achievement of their future. I am one of those who believe that we will have a strong, free and prosperous nation the day everyone of us in this country becomes strong, autonomous and firm of purpose.

[English]

● (1530)

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians as well as myself are dedicated to the belief that democracy is best for this country and that government must be the servant of the people rather than the master. For that reason, I am very pleased that the Social Credit party have put forward this motion; included in it are subjects for discussion which I want to cover today.

I am particularly interested in the concept in the motion that the government has shown lack of foresight and leadership in the conduct of the affairs of this nation. That is certainly a fact. It has also shown a failure to fulfil its promise of a fair and just society. It is certainly fair to say there has been a deterioration in the social and economic climate of this country.

I want first to deal with the question of democracy. On reviewing the record of this administration, I do not think anyone would dispute the fact that there have been very bold and well designed steps to take away the power of this institution of parliament: they have been designed to emasculate parliament and to concentrate power in the hands of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his cabinet.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Yewchuk: If the hon. member from Toronto would listen for a moment, he may find that is in fact true. Let us go back to 1969. We had a debate in this House which lasted almost the whole summer, dealing with the question of rule changes in the House of Commons. We debated very significant changes which removed the power of this House to question the government on its activities and to make it accountable to parliament and the people for its expenditures. The government went so far as to bring in closure in order to bring in a rule that would make closure of debate very much easier. I am referring to rule 75C.