

Economic Conditions

believe he mentioned that ten civilizations have gone through a successive series of events which he classified under the age of decadence. It is certainly easy to see how we fit into that pattern which has been so typical of other civilizations. We have heard the discussions about the constitution, we have heard talk about inflation and about money supply. There is virtually nothing that has not been touched upon by various members on this side of the House, as you know yourself, Mr. Speaker, having been here for a good part of the night. It was done in a very eloquent fashion and with good information presented. We did appreciate having a few members of the government staying with us. In fact, two or three have spent the whole night with us, and there is one still here now who has spent the whole night with us.

I want to lay emphasis this morning, not on what we have heard today so far, mainly an emphasis on short-term problems and short-term solutions. I would like to touch for a few moments on what I look at as being the long-term problem which has led to the crisis which we have and suggests that the long-term solution has been completely ignored by the present government. I think it behooves them to look more seriously at this long-term solution. I look upon the long-term cause of the crisis we are in now as being, as was mentioned many times, the desire of this government to get power. We have seen this over a good many years where their main motivation has been to get power over and beyond any concern for principles, scruples or what have you. If they could have power, that to them was the ultimate goal.

If one looks at how you get that power in a democratic society such as we have, in my view—and I have thought about this since coming to the House in the last six years—perhaps the greatest weakness of our democratic system is the fact that a political party which is as determined to have power as this Liberal party has been over the last two or three decades is able very easily to convince the people that they deserve to be in power, but it is done by nothing less than bribery, in my view. It is a system whereby a political party will guarantee to the people something for nothing, something that the people perceive to be for nothing. It is guaranteed and promised to them through their own tax dollars, which in my view is despicable.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Halliday: We have witnessed something that was very well described recently in one of the standing committees when we had as a witness the president of the National Research Council. We saw the Liberal party choose a course after the last war, the main goal of which was to get power, but their mechanism in this kind of a democracy was to get power by promising a new social program come every election, something tangible in the form of money which they could get for nothing.

Much as I appreciate the need for social programs, I have long been an exponent of the necessity of having the appropriate social programs which look after the needs of those people who have special needs. Nonetheless, I maintain that 90 per

cent of Canadians, or perhaps even more, are very capable of looking after their own needs by their own endeavours. Part of the slow destruction of our civilization is a result, in my view, of the usurping by governments of the responsibility and the individuality of people in their opportunity to provide the social programs for themselves. I think governments have a real responsibility to provide for the citizens of their jurisdiction those things which the citizens cannot provide for themselves. I am thinking of such things as the postal service, the immigration service or the military service. Those are the essentials that an individual cannot provide for himself. There are certain people in our society who are unable to provide for their medical services, services for children, old age security, and so on. The government should accept that responsibility, but as soon as it goes beyond that and decides to take care of all of us, then the people start to become irresponsible and we see an increase in crime such as we have today. This is due to the fact that governments have made individuals less and less important; it leads to that type of irresponsibility.

● (0830)

Over the last two or three decades, in its effort to retain power, the government has promised one program after another. Over the last ten years in particular we have heard the idea that everything must be universal; universality was the catch word. It is interesting how it began to change in the last year or two. In fact, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) is actually obsessed with it. She has a real obsession that things must be universal.

It is interesting of late that this minister is not only suffering from a compulsive type complex but she has now become schizophrenic in a sense. As recently as this week, in response to a question by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) concerning social programs and medicare, she made the following statement as recorded on page 5847 of *Hansard*: We are reviewing our programs with a view to focusing on those most in need.

For years I have been suggesting—and I still maintain it—that this is a responsibility of government. The government should focus, as the minister said, on those most in need. But how can a minister who pretends to be responsible deny a certain type of schizophrenia if, on one hand, programs are supposed to be universal and, on the other hand, the minister wants to look after those who are most in need? Obviously they are incompatible, and it behooves the Minister of National Health and Welfare to take a look at the side of the issue on which she wants to be. She cannot have it both ways.

In my view, that is the reason for some of the financial difficulties. The crisis of today is partly because the government, in order to retain its power, promised programs for which it has been unable to pay. It becomes abundantly clear, when debts of \$15 billion a year are being financed, with service charges of something in the order of \$14.5 billion, that we are unable to finance social programs, as good, desirable and necessary as they may be for some people. But by no means is it necessary for that kind of service to be supplied to