

people all the time. No doubt there will be conflicts and contradictions, particularly in trying to deal with the tough problems that will arise during the transition period. As the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, perhaps the best that one can hope for is some form of rough justice. That, however, is surely far more preferable than the rough injustice created by inflation itself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I must say that I am obliged to the members of the official opposition for referring to the past. I want, with the same kind of gentleness and restraint for which I am always known—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):—and which the Leader of the Opposition demonstrated the other day, to refer to the question raised about the policies followed by his party at the time of the 1974 election campaign and before. I would probably be less than human if I did not comment on the remarks that he made, perhaps out of context, about energy conservation. There was a lot of talk by the Leader of the Opposition last Tuesday about changes of mind, changes of direction and suggestions about problems of immorality. I invite the House to go back several months to the evening when the conservation program was announced here. The most fundamental observation the Leader of the Opposition could make at that time about that program was to trot out his rather tired old joke about underwear. Indeed, those who were present at that time will recall the statement had to be made over the hollering and yelling of his supporters who at that time were not deeply interested in energy conservation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): There is a learning factor in these things. If several months later the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to take a positive viewpoint toward energy conservation, I welcome him to the fold and promise not to berate him again for his change of heart.

● (1230)

As I anticipated, the Leader of the Opposition could not resist the temptation to characterize the program now being put forward by the government as a vindication of the mandatory, comprehensive prices and incomes control program he advocated during the last election campaign and for 15 months before that. It is, of course, nothing of the kind.

I referred the other day to an important and valuable witness in this context whom I should like to summon—and I will call only one witness in this regard—with respect to the assertion made by the Leader of the Opposition and the wisdom of the policy he put forward during the 1974 election. I refer, of course, to the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies), a professional economist, a former dean of the school of business at York University, a former chairman, on behalf of the big blue machine, of the Ontario Economic Council, a former Conservative financial critic, and the architect of the wage and price control

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program which he first proposed in this House on behalf of his party on February 22, 1973.

Mr. Alexander: This is what you call co-operation? I get the point.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): That is an interesting notion implied by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander). This is the kind of parliamentary give-and-take that he likes: he gives, but he cannot take. Speaking to the Kiwanis Club of Toronto on September 3, 1975, the hon. member for Don Valley contended that a case could be made for the position adopted by the Conservative Party when it was first put forward in the Spring of 1973. But, he added—and this is a direct quotation from his text:

As you will recall, in the fall of 1973 the OPEC countries raised the price of oil and started their embargo and the economic situation throughout the world changed. Obviously, new economic policies were required but the response of the Progressive Conservative Party was that the public expected national parties to stay with their position.

The hon. member continued:

On the face of it, such a stand is absurd because policies must change with prevailing conditions. The party lost credibility and, as usual, the Canadian people were not willing to elect a party that seemed so incompetent.

I will say no more about the Conservative view in this connection. It would seem to me that in all probability the more meaningful debate which could take place on this subject would be inside the official opposition caucus room rather than in this chamber.

As for the New Democratic Party, to adapt an immortal phrase of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), it seems to me the leader of that party tipped over a few ashcans himself when putting his policy forward the other day. During the course of the debate, the hon. gentleman agreed that inflation presented a very serious problem, but his proposals for dealing with that problem were notable for their absence. He by no means stands alone in his contention that, while the prices and incomes measures proposed by the government may well be effective in restraining wages and salaries, they will be quite ineffective in restraining prices and profits.

He gave two reasons—two contradictory reasons—to support this contention. He said there was no way of preventing an army of company accountants circumventing the guidelines by padding costs and manipulating profits. I have to confess that this is an arguable case. At the same time, I know of no one with less credibility to advance that argument than the leader of the New Democratic Party. How many speeches have we heard inside and outside the House by a succession of NDP leaders and their followers demanding the establishment of some kind of federal agency to restrain excessive profits and prices? During the last election campaign, David Lewis stomped back and forth across the country calling for the creation of a national price control board to investigate and roll back prices which it found to be unjustifiably high. Speaking in Vancouver two weeks ago, Mr. Lewis' successor, the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), is reported by the Canadian Press to have told a news conference that Canada should meet inflation head on by establishing a prices review board with teeth in it. He keeps referring to the teeth. While he was out in Vancouver he must have gone to see "Jaws".