

Supply

Mr. Clark: Before my minute starts, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to accept the correction from the hon. member. I would certainly want his electors to know who he is. I want them to know what he does when he votes against their interests today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: May I reserve a final moment for the New Democratic Party. This vote would have occurred last week except that the NDP chose to save the government. It was a deliberate decision to act with the Liberals, just as the NDP acts with the Liberals on any basic question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: They were in bed together on the Constitution. They were in bed together against the Crosbie budget. They fled together from the vote last Friday.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order. The Leader of the Opposition may continue only if there is unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The minister nods his head to indicate that there was unanimous consent, but I heard no.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue to discuss. It is unfortunate with an issue that is of such prime importance to so many Canadians that instead of a thoughtful and rational approach, we are treated to high comedy and serious tragedy by the House of Commons best replacement for the "Perils of Pauline" that we have seen in many a year.

It is a sad spectacle when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) has to come and appeal to Liberals because he knows he will never get support from his own side of the floor. It is a tragic commentary on the state of disrepute that the Conservative caucus has fallen into, that the only solace the poor Leader of the Opposition can find is to appeal to Liberals to support him on his motion. There is a party that once had a proud tradition of independence, a proud tradition of speaking for itself. What we have now is the Leader of the Opposition on bended knee saying "Liberals, please give us a hand."

It is equally sad that the Leader of the Opposition can find as his only source for his resolution good ideas put forward by Liberal members. It is understandable because we know the paucity of ideas among the Conservative caucus. If there is a danger of bankruptcy in Canada, it is the bankruptcy of ingenuity, imagination and creativity of the Conservative caucus. Therefore, what must they do? They must put a resolution forward that simply endorses the kind of creative imagination put forward by Liberal members, as requested by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen).

Now they say, "let us have a motion of non-confidence." We know it is simply a gimmick on the part of the Leader of the Opposition. He has more gimmicks than a K-Tel advertisement. The whole theory for the policy of the Leader of the Opposition is not deny, keep repeating yourself and maybe someone will believe you. Well, they do not believe him because the record of the Conservative Party shows there is nothing to believe.

A few weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition, standing up in high dudgeon, with all that pomposity of which only he is capable, said that 60,000 mothers are going to be denied their child tax credit. Two days later his staff member whispers *sotto voce*, "I am sorry, it wasn't that number; we had to sort of make it up."

Then we have the brave spokesman, the finance critic, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) saying on one hand, "put the interest rates down," and then going to the Montreal Canadian Club and saying "leave them the way they are." The problem is they do not know what they believe. They have no credibility because they have no policy.

The only kind of posture they can take in this House and across the country is to try to set up a whole world of mythology and imagery about these anonymous bureaucrats who are making policy. It is not anonymous bureaucrats making policy, it is members of this caucus, members of the treasury benches, members of our constituency associations whom we talk to and consult with. The reason we are in power and they are not is that we endorse the principle that we have a party that is united behind us and for which we speak.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: We are not a party that is fragmented into so many pieces we cannot keep count from day to day because we do not know who is going to be in which chair. We do not know who is a member of the Tory caucus and we cannot keep count without a score card.

It really is a remarkable performance, Mr. Speaker, when you think of what the past record of the Conservative Party is. A statement in the *Toronto Star* in 1979 quotes the then Prime Minister as saying "We must have higher interest rates because in the short term they are going to have to do some good." Now we have him saying "bring them down." I guess they were all right in 1979, but somehow they are not good enough in 1982. How does he expect people to believe him when something he was prepared to stand on as a matter of principle in 1979 he all of a sudden discovers is no longer of any use?

● (1250)

We hear the remarkable statement of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, lecturing people on how to be straightforward. If anyone in the House has a record for zigzagging, for repeating his steps and withdrawing statements, it is the Leader of the Opposition. Talk about broken promises, Mr. Speaker!

An hon. Member: Is he from Yellowhead or yellow fever?