

Supply

very disappointed in the Conservatives' record. They thought that the Conservatives could have done more on behalf of their interests. I was fair, as I always am, in saying that they were doing their best.

In conclusion, while I agree Throne Speeches are good, I find the legal arguments somewhat lacking and would suggest that those arguments be enhanced for future discussion. More importantly, it is time that we demand that the Government begin addressing the real problems, because that is what the people of Canada care about.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions, comments and answers.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the remarks of the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans). Before I pose my question I must say that I find the attitude taken by the Acting House Leader for the New Democratic Party quite incredible. He apparently talks on one hand about the necessity of having constructive proposals brought before Parliament so that Members of Parliament can truly represent their constituents and reflect their sensitivities, hopes and aspirations, while on the other hand not understanding the value, purpose and the necessity of requiring the Government to bring forward from time to time, preferably annually, a rethinking of its priorities with respect to the economy, social issues and the unemployed in our country.

Does the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain not understand that the major importance of having a Speech from the Throne on an annual basis is to force the Government to reflect upon its priorities and come forward with a new set of legislative proposals? Instead, we are faced with carrying on for an unlimited time, in excess of three years, endless debates about policies from a Speech from the Throne which has caused nothing but a sense of despair, as the Hon. Member referred to it, and has brought acrimony to this Chamber since there are no new items of debate or direction from the Government.

As the Acting House Leader of his Party, how can he condone and in fact endorse the concept of not having an annual Speech from the Throne?

Mr. Deans: I am glad the Hon. Member prefaced his question by saying that he listened to my comments at least in part. Quite obviously, the part he did not listen to was the part that would have answered his question.

I did not say that I did not see the necessity of a Throne Speech. I said that in effect it was an academic question which would not result in the kind of changes that are necessary to meet the economic problems of the day. I pointed out, for example, all of the things that have happened to this country. Does the Hon. Member think for one moment that the Government would have told us that it intended to do those things, to drive up interest rates, to drive people out of their homes or off their farms? Does the Hon. Member think that the Government would have come forward and told us that the Government was going to push up oil prices?

• (1220)

What I am saying is that you have to have a Government that will come forward in both an objective and an honest way with what it proposes to do. I am just not convinced that it be the case. We could have taken the time to debate whatever the Government brought forward, but I do not think it would have altered what happened one single bit. That is my worry.

Mark you, Mr. Speaker, and I must say this quickly to the Hon. Member, one of the things that could have helped would have been some degree of consistency on the part of the Hon. Member's colleagues. It was awfully difficult when we in this Party were arguing against high interest rates to have the then finance critic for the Government arguing that they were necessary and for the then labour critic arguing that they were not. It was awfully difficult when we were arguing about the impact of oil prices on the country as a whole to have their colleagues divided, some in favour and some against high oil prices.

Mr. Kaplan: You were divided too.

Mr. Deans: It was awfully difficult, I might say—

An Hon. Member: Tell us about the Constitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. With all due respect to the Hon. Member, he seems to be straying a little far from the resolution before the House.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to hear those allegations of differences of opinion within one Party from the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain. In the Hon. Member's opening remarks he quickly dismissed the argument that there should be a new session. Is the Hon. Member in disagreement with the following comments from *Hansard*:

The idea of the Speech from the Throne is that once in a while the Government has to set down its program for the year.

In the same speech we find the following:

If the British tradition is worth anything, it is a fact that we should get a new session of Parliament at least once every year. In our own case it is dealt with in an oblique way in the Constitution. Section 20 of the British North America Act provides:

"There shall be a session of the Parliament of Canada once at least in every Year"—

I draw to the attention of the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain that that quotation was from a speech made by his predecessor, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). Is the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain in disagreement with his predecessor or does he agree with those remarks from *Hansard* for February 27, 1976?

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, that is a relevant question. I do not disagree with that, neither have I suggested that I did. I said I thought that was desirable, that it would be useful. I also said, however, that I thought we would not be told the truth anyway. Therefore, to go through the exercise, I do not believe it is legally imperative, at least not on the basis of the argument I have heard so far. I said I believe it would be desirable if I thought the Government would tell the truth. I find from