

*The Address — Mr. Deans*

other days, and on how they were able to interweave the affairs of their own constituencies with the affairs of the nation, and use as examples of their support or opposition to the Government's those measures matters which directly relate to their own constituencies.

Let me take just one brief moment to say to new Members that the role we have all taken on is of vital importance. There are times when the people of Canada wonder, I am sure, whether or not what we do makes much sense. There are times, I am positive, when they watch us on television, as my mother no doubt is doing now, and they wonder whether or not we know what we are trying to achieve or have any idea of where we are trying to get to.

I urge Members not to be disillusioned by the comments they will receive over the course of their time here. The work that we do is of vital importance on both sides of the House. The work done by the Government and by government supporters is important in the sense that it provides for the country an idea, a view, a vision, of the way in which this country should grow and develop. The work of the Opposition I venture to say is of equal importance inasmuch as we provide alternatives, alternatives to that which the Government is attempting to achieve, hopefully having in mind the sense that there has to be some co-operation and understanding.

I approach, as does my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) and my colleague from Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy) a new session with a sense of anticipation. I listened to the then government throughout the election campaign and watched as it floundered, worried as I am sure its members did, about the imminent loss of power. But I want to say to them that the loss of power is not necessarily a bad thing. Notwithstanding my partisan views, the fact that there has been a change in government will do some credit to the system itself. It is a vital part of the political system that there be a change in government from time to time, and while I may not subscribe to the change that took place in a personal way I nevertheless subscribe to the fact that a change was inevitable, that change is necessary, and I look forward to the day when yet another change will take place, as inevitably it will. I hope in some way to be part of that change; whether in a major or a minor sense only the electors will tell.

I watched also with interest the then Leader of the Opposition as he went about the country setting out what it was he hoped to achieve. I must say, and perhaps the first partisan comment I will make, that while I listened with great care to him and understood, I think, what it was he was trying to impart by way of a vision of Canada, I am frankly disappointed in the way in which he has chosen to implement it.

My colleague, from Chicoutimi I believe, who spoke some time ago said that the Government was to be judged on the merits of its proposals. I had some questions in my mind as I listened to what he was saying, as I had on the day when the Throne Speech was read, and then on the subsequent Thursday when the budgetary statement was brought down. The first question I had was, is the Government being frank? I

have come to the conclusion over the course of the last two or three weeks that although the Government speaks with a sense of openness and frankness, that the Government is attempting to impart a sense of understanding and a newness about Government involvement in the community at large, there is something sorely lacking.

This is a Government which when in Opposition was adamantly and vociferously opposed to secrecy. I must say that in the short time the Government has been in office it has embarked on a path of secrecy that I have not yet seen in my political lifetime. I worry about that. This Government is a government that asks people to have faith and says there will be need for co-operation, that there will be a need in the country for confidence. Yet this is the Government that is apparently afraid to give to the people of Canada all of the information necessary in order that they can make judgments about whether or not they want to place their confidence in this Government's measures. I warn the Government now that it cannot get away with that indefinitely. A government cannot do that indefinitely.

The people of Canada have a right to know not only what it is the Government hopes to do for them, not only what it is the Government hopes to achieve with them, but also what the cost will be. The people ultimately must decide. It is not enough to say to them, "Well, you can decide at election time". People have the right to make decisions day by day and to influence if they can the direction that the Government is taking, based on the knowledge they have been given by the Government.

If, for example, we were to tell the people of Canada what the cost would be in terms of jobs as a result of the economic policy now being pursued by the Government, setting aside the claim by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and others that somehow or other some great confidence will envelop the country and everything will turn out well, and if we were to look statistically at what the Government has proposed, analyse it carefully and then present it to the public of Canada on the one hand as what we want to do, and on the other hand what it will cost, then the public will be able to discuss with their individual Members of Parliament in Government and in the Opposition benches whether or not they believe that is the course they are prepared to follow, and whether or not they are prepared to have their individual Member of Parliament vote for or support that course of action.

I suggest if there is to be openness in government and if you want people to participate, to begin with the Government must make available to the people all of the relevant information. To this point members of the Government have not done that. On a test of frankness, I think quite bluntly that they have failed that test to this point in time. I ask them to reconsider the direction in which they are going. I also ask them to reconsider the economic direction.

● (1710)

However, more important at the moment, I ask the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain) to con-