

thinking of the old ways and what happened in the nineteenth century.

Some of the policies they articulated might have been fine for Canada in the late 1800s or early 1900s but they do not apply to the complex world we live in today. Listening to some of the ideas put forward by the Progressive Conservatives, one has a sense of history. That is not a blanket condemnation of them all as one hears many progressive ideas in a debate such as the one we are involved in today.

I want to refer to some of the positive ideas offered by members of the New Democratic Party, some backbench Liberals, and even the odd Tory. There is an element of frustration in the land today, Mr. Speaker. By and large, people have lost faith in the political leadership of the country at the national, provincial and even the local levels. I wonder if it is not time for the Government to set aside a number of days when members of the New Democratic Party could lay out, in a creative, innovative and positive style, what they feel we ought to be doing for both the short term and the long term. We could forget about the way the Government and some Tory Provincial governments have erred and set out what we feel should be done in the short term and in the long term. We could even ask the Liberals to lay out what they think the long and short-term solutions to our problems are. Then, almost by definition, we would expect the Progressive Conservatives to tell the country precisely what they feel should be done in the long term and in the short term.

I have a difficult time trying to understand what the Progressive Conservatives think should be done. One Member says that we need to stimulate the economy, while the blue chip advisory committee of the Government says that it is time to abandon the six and five program and to stimulate the economy—not to the extent of hundreds of millions but, in the words of Ian Sinclair, to the extent of billions and billions of dollars.

The finance critic for the Progressive Conservatives says that they do not believe in deficit expansion. But, in response to a question, he said that they want to use the tax system to give tax advantages to corporations and to medium and small businesses in order to stimulate the economy. Anyone knows that when tax loopholes are provided for the private sector in order to stimulate the economy, it means less revenue will accrue to the Government coffers. It does not take much imagination to figure that out. When less corporate tax and less personal income tax is collected, it means that it is likely the deficit will increase. Do the Conservatives believe in an expanded deficit or do they not? One gets a different impression according to which Member one listens to.

In the last few moments available to me, Mr. Speaker, let me say something about foreign investment. We have heard a great deal about the need to stimulate investment, to encourage investment, both at home and from abroad. One of the problems when we talk about investment, particularly foreign investment, is that we do not differentiate between investment that comes in from loans and simply loans to Canadian corporations from the outside to encourage them to expand

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and investment from equity loans when foreign investors from Germany, Japan or the United States come here and buy equity in Canada, in other words, foreign control of Canada. I think it is time, if we are going to say that we agree or disagree with foreign involvement or “foreign investment”, that we distinguish between equity involvement and simply loans.

● (1650)

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Northwest Territories and my friend from British Columbia in the New Democratic Party for allowing me to participate for a few moments in the debate this afternoon. I have sat in the House all day and listened to this debate. In some respects it has been an interesting one, interesting because we have begun for the first time a question and answer period. I hope for people who are watching the debate that it has been more stimulating than the usual debate when people read from texts, which may be necessary from time to time and when people make long speeches, such as those made by Ministers of Finance on budget nights, but which are not so necessary on other occasions.

I am impressed with the questions and answers from both sides of the House. I am equally impressed with the way in which the Chair has, in this first time that we have gone into the experimental period, handled itself in terms of fairness to everyone. I hope that we are seeing a new structure and some new form in debate which might be followed by some new substance.

There is one concern I have about Parliament. I am not alone. The Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson) feels strongly about this place, and I know the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Campbell), who is here, feels very strongly about this place, and the Hon. Member who has just spoken also feels strongly about Parliament. I am speaking about the issue of partisanship. I do not say this from the point of view of anyone who has never taken part in the barbs of which people speak. I have done that. We have all done that at one time or another. But what I call crass partisanship does not do this institution any good at all. Every time we call one another names, as we do from time to time, it does detract from the debate, which all of us are interested in promoting as a worthwhile Canadian exercise.

That is one of the purposes of the reforms. When I use the word partisanship, I think it is very important to understand what it means. If partisanship is to be meanness, crassness, calling one another sleazy or shouting across the floor of the House of Commons with a lack of civility, it is not the kind of thing which uplifts this institution. But if it is the clash of ideas, ideas that may be forcefully put, then I believe that kind of partisanship is a good thing and is the purpose of this institution.

Today we have had a clash of ideas. We have had a clash in the Question Period and a clash in the speeches that have been made by Hon. Members. I think this is one of the best debates we have had the opportunity to have.