

The Address—Mr. Oostrom

● (1550)

Let me illustrate. Between 1980 and 1984, only 404,000 jobs were created. The Progressive Conservative Government has created over 500,000 jobs in less than half the time. More significantly, more than 80 per cent of the jobs which were created by this Government have been full time jobs, as our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) indicated this afternoon. This is concrete proof that the Government is keeping true to its pledge of providing employment to the Canadian people. This has been done at a time when our deficit has dropped by \$4 billion while the deficit in the United States increased by \$40 billion.

During the past two years I have had many calls from people in my riding representing restaurants, garages, small factories, offices and crating companies, crying for people to come and work for them. These jobs are not at minimum wage as the Leader of the New Democratic Party stated this afternoon, but some at double the rate of minimum wage. Jobs are being created because our policies have restored confidence in the Canadian economy.

Canada's inflation rate has been in the 4 per cent range for two years now, the most stable price environment since the 1960s. Again, our economic management has allowed the inflation rate to remain very stable. No longer is there double-digit inflation. This allows Canadians to maintain that purchasing power that they cherish and, therefore, contribute to the economy by purchasing more goods and services.

According to the Conference Board, consumer confidence is at its highest level in over 21 years and its second highest level on record in Canada.

As a result of renewed confidence and lower interest rates, housing starts have risen by some 40 per cent since September, 1984. This translates into 125,000 jobs in construction related industries alone. Today, mortgage rates are more than three percentage points lower than they were in September, 1984. The prime rate averaged just over 12 per cent in 1984, dropped to about 10.5 per cent in 1985, and today stands at 9.75 per cent. It is the lowest it has been in eight years. We can recall 1980 and 1981 when interest rates rocketed to over 20 per cent. How could Canadians afford to buy a home then? It is again possible to buy a home.

The facts speak for themselves. There is no real embellishment here because the facts I have quoted are real and are recognized, especially by other nations, if not at home. There is still more room for improvement. I believe that my Government can still do better. The economic direction of the Throne Speech will ensure that our election promises are fulfilled and that all our goals for a renewed vibrant economy are met and perhaps even exceeded.

Let me turn to the subject of taxes. It has been said that death and taxes will always be with us. I acknowledge, as do other Canadians, that our tax system is necessary in order to provide us with the wide range of social services that we enjoy. Through the years, the tax system has been allowed to become

regressive and inefficient by previous Governments. The Throne Speech makes it clear that federal tax reform will be one of our top economic and social priorities.

An efficient and fair tax system will give Canadians more disposable income which will help to generate more beneficial economic activities. The principal objective of changes made so far has been to broaden the tax base in order to lower personal income taxes. We will also restore a healthy balance among the personal and corporate taxes and, specifically, reverse the trend which has resulted in greater reliance on personal income taxes. The Government will begin by making the tax system less complex and, wherever possible, structure the system so that the burdens are shared in an equitable manner. We are embarking on a comprehensive reform of our tax system, much the same as the American Government is now experiencing.

After our election we moved quickly in ensuring that no taxpayer would ever again have to pay taxes in dispute before an impartial hearing had been concluded. The declaration of taxpayers' rights was the first step in overhauling our tax system. It was a step that had been long overdue. It was the first time since our tax system became so complex that the individual was given preference.

The Throne Speech provides a refreshing attitude toward social issues. The Government has resolved to defend and strengthen the institution of the Canadian family. We recognize the importance of keeping the family unit strong. Families are the backbone of Canada. Cohesive families give Canada strength and character, which make problems easier to face and solve. We are moving rapidly to neutralize the destructive influences that drugs and pornography have on the family. The residents of Willowdale are very concerned over the proliferation of pornographic materials. They are concerned that pornography teaches sexual deviation, abnormal behaviour, and promotes violence toward women and children. I strongly believe that pornography is nothing more than vicious anti-women propaganda, the sole purpose of which is to degrade by making women nothing more than objects.

The Government is determined to take effective action against the serious and growing threat posed by the traffic of illegal drugs. Tough action is the only way to deal with this growing cancer of drug abuse which is destroying the lives of many Canadians. There should be no question of our resolve in this matter.

The Government moved quickly in the first session of Parliament to pass Bill C-18, which produced a considerable reduction in the number of instances of impaired driving, the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal road accidents. The stiffer penalties have caused many people to think twice before getting behind the wheel after drinking. As a result, there were fewer road accidents during the 1985 Christmas season than at any other Christmas in many years. We demonstrated to all Canadians that we have the resolve to deal with tough social issues.