

gloom. On the contrary, the Minister of Finance showed realism and common sense. Without delusions he gave us a realistic analysis of the economic situation of which all the indicators had been carefully reviewed, in order to submit to the Canadian people an assessment which although perhaps a little on the dark side was not on the other hand deceptive. The minister made us quite aware of the present difficult economic climate from which we hope to see a recovery after 1981.

As a former insurance agent I have always tried to help people take precautions even though some people find it funny, but it is a fact that in the field of insurance we help people take precautions in order to be able to face many eventualities just as the Liberal government has made itself the sponsor of a set of measures which will reassure Canadians. In order to reach energy stability, an ambitious energy program has been devised. I hope the hon. member who had the floor before me will be pleased to hear that because he was asking for a government policy based on energy needs and said as reported at page 2333 of *Hansard* for December 13, 1979 and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, what we needed was a budget which would have helped us fight against unemployment and inflation, improve our deficit in the balance of payments and provide a true energy program.

● (1800)

In that respect, I am happy to indicate that some of his wishes have been answered. The Liberal government has indeed embarked on a plan where the focus will be on satisfying the prerequisites for self-sufficiency, to be achieved by the end of the decade. Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock? With your permission I would like to continue at eight o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order please. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Lapointe (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my total endorsement of this direction because it reminds me of the Beauce region. I have seen hundreds of industries "made in Beauce" develop and I would be truly proud if Canadians could take over at least 50 per cent of the oil and gas production by 1990.

Secondly, the former member for Beauce will be glad to learn, in light of his heavy criticism of the budget deficit, that my government made a formal commitment to progressively decrease the deficit over a three to four-year period, which will help to reduce inflation. The deficit will go from \$14.2 billion

to \$11.8 billion in 1983 and 1984, which will allow for economic recovery.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak of the liberal energy program. This is an extremely attractive program, in my opinion, because it is the first true effort made by a government to secure guarantees for supplies and a fair distribution of energy resources in order to withstand the instability of world prices. Canadians can equip themselves with the necessary tools. Our government is taking a first step towards reducing our dependence on foreign oil and thus toward reducing the danger of economic upheavals in our country. My government has also kept its promise in deciding wisely not to push Canadian prices to world levels, in order to avoid constant increases in those prices.

The Liberals are acutely aware of the fact that succeeding price increases will not make the "Beaucerons", for instance, become aware that a new era is starting, one in which substitutes for oil are seriously considered; instead, a budget providing for fixed but moderate increases will allow the people to adapt in a less radical but more desirable way.

The energy problem is now of concern to all Canadians. We are all aware, as our government is, that we will have to pay more for oil and natural gas. But, at least, thanks to the sensible policy of this government, we will be paying prices that are clearly lower than those paid by consumers in other industrial countries, and lower than those advocated by the Crosbie budget.

Through their principles of justice and equity, the Liberals are also promising to grant all Canadians an equal share in the revenue and benefits through a price system that divides them equitably. We find the very essence of that principle of sharing in the following excerpt from "The National Energy Program" as given on page 13, and I quote:

The citizens of Canada and their national government, have played a major role in fostering the development of the oil and gas industry, and deserve to share in its benefits.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to those various energy measures such as moderately high prices, a fiscal policy, a spending plan and federal action, I am sure that we will succeed in instilling in our constituents a new philosophy, if I may say so, dealing with our natural resources which are still quite numerous in some sectors but rather scarce in others as is the case for oil.

The gradual price increases of oil, that is less than \$4 a barrel for 1980 and \$4.50 for the years 1982, 1983 and 1984 matched with moderate steps are an indication that the government has abided with its commitment of the last election campaign.

When I ran last February as a candidate under the Liberal banner in Beauce riding, I was intimately convinced that the Liberal party was the most equitable party. It has demonstrated that it is indeed the most equitable party by increasing the price of gas by 13 cents a gallon instead of 32 cents a gallon,