

reference to improving the guidelines for the spouse's allowance. We will have to wait and see, of course, just what this means. Now that the hon. member for Missisquoi (Mr. Graftey) has been removed from social programs, we might assume that a less hard line on selectivity will be taken on this and other social programs. Had he stayed where he was, no doubt we would have seen the application of Tory philosophy in the form of the means test, and we may still see it. But in my opinion this is not the route to go. The principles of universality in pensions and the spouse's allowance must never be tampered with.

Our senior citizens receive the pension not as a privilege but as a right. They deserve it because of their hard work throughout the years, and because of their contribution to society. They have paid into this scheme throughout their lives, and it is only fair and just that they all receive the pension in their later years. In any case, those in higher income brackets return the pension with their taxes. I hope the government will not be so foolish as to apply the means test to old age pensioners.

I was also interested to hear that amendments would be made to veterans legislation. I sincerely hope that those measures will improve the lot of those who, in many cases, gave the best years of their lives for their country, and improve the lot also of their widows and dependants. However, I am fearful of this. This government has seen fit to insult our war veterans by abolishing the Ministry of Veterans Affairs as a full time portfolio. I can tell this government that veterans across this country will not take it lying down. They are not that kind of people, and neither are their sons or daughters. Certainly that is the word which I get from Newfoundland.

My colleague, the former member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe who now occupies a position in the other place, must have been shocked and angered to hear of the disregard for veterans' rights. For years in this House he fought incessantly to improve the lot of veterans like himself. I know that Senator Ches Carter, another champion of veterans, must have been shocked and angered as well. I can tell veterans that this party will not forget them and that we will speak on their behalf in this chamber to ensure that their interests are protected. War veterans have many vivid memories. They do not easily forget, and I can tell you they will not forget this government.

There are other measures that we look forward to with great interest. I welcome the extension of the power of Parliament and greater prominence given to private members' initiatives. I should congratulate, too, my own member of Parliament, the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) on attaining the position he now occupies. I am sure that he will lend to that position the competence and dignity that he lent to his former position as House leader for the opposition. I welcome the reference in the throne speech to this measure.

I welcome too the suggestion of a youth employment secretariat and an employment strategy for women. I welcome the indication that the mandate of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion will be strengthened. This policy, a policy of our party, has been a tremendous asset to our people in improving services and expanding business in the Atlantic

The Address—Mr. Rompkey

provinces. These are positive and progressive measures and, provided they are well thought through, they should mean a great improvement.

Most of the campaign promises of this government were quickly forgotten, shelved, or "task-forced" once they got into office. One they did keep was the transfer of ownership of offshore resources of Newfoundland. There has been a strong positive reaction to this in our province. The House misunderstands the background of this. For decades my province has been a virtual ward of central Canada. Newfoundlanders have resented coming to Ottawa cap in hand for DREE agreements and other special concessions. They have never been satisfied that equalization payments have been such a large portion of the provincial budget. They have tried desperately to change an economy where unemployment insurance payments amount to \$250 million a year, ranking after wages in transportation, and ahead of wages and salaries in fishing, mining, hospitals, and education. The amount from unemployment insurance is second only to the wages and salaries we get from biggest contributor of all to the provincial economy, and that is transportation.

We have always been an independent people in the best sense of the word, and we have never been afraid of hard work. Now, with clear indications of lucrative oil discoveries off our shores, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians see an opportunity to be self-reliant, self-supporting, and to contribute to, rather than draw from, the Canadian confederation. Of course we have contributed already our culture, our history, our songs and stories, and our traditions. When Canada is searching for an identity we have at least known who we are and where we come from. But now the emphasis must be on where we are going.

It is important for us to protect our way of life from the possible disruptions that the development of oil reserves can cause. Many of our people still live in small communities by the sea, sustained by a fishing economy and the strong bonds of community life. We must ensure that development is controlled, that it is not disruptive, and that it does not fracture or overwhelm the present way of life in Newfoundland. We must ensure that development is in the best interests of our people and that they will derive both immediate and lasting benefits from it. Therefore Newfoundland must have the power to look after its interest, but we will need to know a great deal more than what is contained in the correspondence between the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) and the premier. What has been agreed to is ownership. What is needed is control. These are interesting words—ownership, control, jurisdiction. How will they be interpreted in legislation and possible constitutional amendments? What will be the final deal? What will be the trade-offs? We will have to wait and see, and we will be watching closely.

Newfoundland and Labrador have legitimate needs, concerns, and rights flowing from their history, but Canada has needs and concerns too. If we want to be full Canadians in every sense of the word, surely we must act to strengthen Canada and not weaken it. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians