

The Address—Mr. Peterson

concept-oriented than a Government that has been action-oriented. That is the complaint he made.

When I look back over the previous four years, I see a Government that has been committed to making major legislative changes in spite of the fact that unanimous consensus has not always been there, a Government that has been prepared to make very difficult decisions which affect Canadians perhaps differently in one part of the country than another.

The first major task that we undertook as a Government was to look at our energy situation and to develop a comprehensive energy policy, the National Energy Program. This was not done without some controversy. We realize that it upset some of the balances that had been there, but in terms of what it accomplished, bringing in a greater portion of this vital industry under Canadian control, having a made in Canada price for consumers and in terms of off-oil subsidies program, we achieved a great deal. We are now in a position where we are not as concerned about supply as we were about four years ago. The supply situation is looking after itself.

Let us look at another area that caused a great deal of controversy, namely, the Charter of Rights. There are those in this House today who rose and said: "You should not have a Charter. Legislators can better look after individual human rights and freedoms than can the courts. Leave it in the hands of the elected representatives. Don't give individuals rights which they themselves can assert in the courts of law." They were talking about equality rights based on sex, religion, country of origin and language, matters that are fundamental to the essence of an individual's concept of his nation. We acted in that area even though we did not have unanimous consent, particularly from the Official Opposition. I am glad Canadians now have a Charter of Rights. That is probably one of the most important long-term contributions which this House could have made to the quality of life of every individual Canadian.

Another major area where we did not have unanimous consent but where we acted was with respect to western transportation. We knew that bottlenecks were coming. We knew that fundamentally western producers had to be able to get their product to market.

There were many who said that to touch the sacrosanct Crow rate was politically stupid, but fundamental changes had to be made. We decided it was more important that the farmers have a way of exporting their grains than to preserve the rate which had been in effect from the late 1900s. I hope that that Crow rate change will resolve itself through the consultative practice that is going on and that any problems which might have arisen can be dealt with in the manner prescribed by the Minister. Please do not tell us that this is a Government that has not had the courage to act.

We are now out of the recession by 14 to 15 months. Inflation is down to its lowest since 1972, at 4.2 per cent. I want to say to all of those in the public sector who had their incomes specifically indexed, and who some feel bore the major brunt of this, that their contribution is appreciated. I say to those who voluntarily came into line that their contribution is

greatly appreciated as well. To those whose incomes have not gone up at all or who have had to take cuts due to the change in the competitive structure in Canada, I say that their contribution to productivity and to controlling inflation has been most important.

Interest rates are about half of what they were at their all-time high. We have to ensure that interest rates do not go up in the future and strangle the recovery which is upon us. This means that we will have to work assiduously to try to control deficits, particularly where the spending is not perceived as being a national priority.

Unemployment, unfortunately, is at a totally unacceptable high level, exceeding 11 per cent. This is not a situation which we as Canadians can live with comfortably. It is our major preoccupation to bring about ways of dealing with this issue, an issue which is really of a crisis nature to those who do not have jobs. In the Budget of April 19, 1983, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) took very positive steps to try to deal with this issue. More than \$4.8 billion through Special Recovery Capital Projects and through tax incentives to the private sector to help it become competitive and to create new jobs was put to the task of dealing with unemployment and creating new jobs for Canadians. Despite the fact that unemployment remains unacceptably high, our record at job creation is unparalleled in the industrialized world. More than 350,000 new jobs have been created in the past 12 months. If we look at our record from 1970 to 1983, we have 50 per cent more jobs in Canada in the latter year than we had at the start of that period. Again this is an unparalleled record in the industrialized world, particularly when we compare our record with that of West Germany, for example, which has actually suffered over that time a 2 per cent decline in the number of jobs.

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What are our challenges in building a strong economy which will create even more jobs and give Canadians the type of economic future for which we have to work? I believe there are two keys to it—first is the new technologies which will make us productive, and second is exports. If I had two keys which I could turn to make the economy stronger and create those jobs, it would be the new technologies and an export-oriented Canadian economy.

Let us look at our present situation with respect to the new technologies. Canada is about the third most productive nation in the world today in terms of output per worker, but the increase in our rate of productivity has fallen dramatically. One way to get that productivity gain up to levels where it would be competitive again is by having new technologies brought into common use by the Canadian worker, Canadian manufacturer and Canadian producer. To me the key to this is, in large measure, research and development.

Research and development is not dispersed and utilized by enough firms in Canada today. There are only about 1,000 firms in Canada which do any research and development. Twenty-five firms out of that thousand do 50 per cent of it, and 100 of them do 75 per cent of it. More and more firms,