

of the chamber, and we have a distinctive approach to public questions. We cannot behave as if that did not matter. We cannot become Tories just to make life easy for ourselves and our colleagues on the other side. That is a reality that has to be taken into account.

There are, in my view, two extremes to be avoided; on the one hand, confrontation, and on the other, automatic acquiescence to every wish of the government. There is a broad area of constructive possibilities in between which can permit us to make an effective contribution to the legislative process.

Honourable senators, on Monday last the Speech from the Throne was read in this chamber, and on Thursday the Minister of Finance delivered an economic statement in the House of Commons. It is difficult to deal with one without dealing with both of them together. Those two statements spoke of change: "a new era of national reconciliation, economic renewal, and social justice", "a fresh start", "a magnificent opportunity to build a renewed national consensus", and "a strategy for growth and jobs".

We certainly applaud the nobility of the sentiments contained in certain passages of both documents. In fact, I can find certain features, certain proposals in the Speech from the Throne, which would certainly command my support and the support, I am sure, of my colleagues, particularly those measures which are forecast to improve the social support enjoyed by citizens of Canada, especially the additional support that will be available to certain categories of citizens between the ages of 60 and 64. That is all to the good. One cannot fail to mention some of these loftier objectives and some specific measures before going on to a more analytical treatment of both of those documents.

I should add that those two statements, the Speech from the Throne and the economic statement, do strive to rewrite the history of Canada for the greater glory of the Conservative party. I should like to return to that theme later.

Many of the themes in the Speech from the Throne are familiar; we heard them during the election campaign. At that time we also heard talk of action. The favourite trilogy of the current prime minister was jobs, jobs, jobs. The Canadian public, day after day, was led to expect action on jobs. Canadians were told that the mere election of a Conservative government would result in the immediate creation of tens of thousands of jobs, that massive investment would flow into the country, and that entrepreneurs would be unleashed from the restraints of doubt and indecision.

That surge did not happen on September 5, and it certainly did not happen on November 9 in the wake of the statement by the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator MacEachen: The economic statement delivered by the minister deserves some scrutiny. The argument is carefully constructed to conceal a deep flaw. The Minister of Finance has presented an economic picture which glosses over certain basic assumptions about economic performance in the months and years ahead. That attempt must be exposed, and to do so

[Senator MacEachen.]

we need only refer to the minister's statement and the supporting budget documents, or economic documents. One should not fall into the bad practice of calling a budget a budget!

The Minister of Finance included a set of projections for growth, inflation, unemployment and the deficit. Are those projections designed to forecast the future under the recently-announced policies of the Conservative government? No, not at all. There is no forecast for growth or unemployment under a Conservative government. The figures are what the Minister of Finance describes as a *status quo* projection. He paints the picture not of what will happen under the current government and the policies which it announced, but of what would happen if the policies of the government were frozen out to the year 1990; what would have happened if the former Liberal government's policies remained untouched and the economic environment unfolded under certain assumptions.

That means, honourable senators, that we cannot look to any of these documents to find any forecast, even any attempt to forecast, what would happen to growth and employment under the policies of this government. In fact, the Minister of Finance has given us numbers on only one aspect of the future; he has projected a figure for the federal deficit in 1985-86. He states that the deficit would have been \$37.1 billion and that with his announced changes it will be \$34.9 billion.

I must say that there is still a good deal of explaining to be done on how these figures were established, but at least we have a prediction of what the Conservative government means; it means cuts. It means, to quote the Minister of Finance, "controlling the deficit must be (the) priority for this year and for each year of the mandate."

So, we have the projection for the deficit. What about the missing elements? How can the public—how can Parliament—be content with a statement which specifically overlooks any attempt to forecast economic performance, especially unemployment, under the new policies of the Conservative government? The Minister of Finance is ready to project with apparent ease what the continuation of the *status quo* would mean, not just tomorrow, next week, next year or the following year, but out to 1990, but he is totally unwilling to say what the consequences of his cuts will be for jobs and unemployment six weeks or six months hence. He is totally unwilling to tell us the impact on these economic parameters as a result of the policies announced in the Speech from the Throne and in the economic statement of last week.

On Friday, of course, he let the cat out of the bag. He said in the House of Commons that he had run the data through the economic model of the Department of Finance. That means that he was given the numbers to show the influence of his announced cuts and other policy changes on jobs and economic performance. He has those numbers, but so far he has refused to disclose them. On the other hand, he is prepared to disclose numbers up to 1990 under a *status quo* projection related to Liberal policies. Why not add to the picture by giving us the full numbers at his disposal? He says that the influence on confidence cannot be measured on economic models. He has no problem producing figures for Liberal