

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, I should say that there is no question in the mind of any of us here that the government could sustain any number of resignations or defections from its parliamentary ranks so long as Keith Davey stays in place.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark:** But, if this throne speech was to have any relevance in current Canadian reality, it had to include above all some sense of direction for Canada, some idea of what the government really intends to do with the current controls program and, equally important, what goals it has for the country as we emerge from that program. Canadians do not know where the government is leading them. The Prime Minister and his colleagues have piled conflicting statement on conflicting statement to the point where the overwhelming characteristic of the Canadian mood is sheer uncertainty.

The government had the opportunity, and I believe the obligation in this throne speech, at least to begin the process of easing that uncertainty; of at least beginning to come clean with Canadians. Instead of that we are given some vague talk about the "middle road", and even more vague promises to begin—note, "to begin"—a process of consultation.

What a confession that is for a government to make; that after a full 12 months of controls it is now thinking seriously of beginning a consultative process. It was clear when this program was first proposed here that the purpose of bringing in controls was to buy some time, to get some breathing space that would allow that kind of consultation, and that would allow the bringing together of the economic partners of Canada in order that we might get some agreement as to what we were going to do once the controls' period was ended.

Having it clearly understood that that was the purpose of the program the government stole, why did it take the government 12 months and even more to begin the simple process of consultation? This was the government that boasted it had its full contingency plans ready some three years ago. Instead of contingency plans and instead of consultation we have wasted a full year, a year in which we have not only begun to suffer the inevitable distortions of a controls régime, but during which the climate for securing some kind of consensus of agreement among the partners in the economy has been seriously eroded, thanks to the Prime Minister's propensity for loose talk and confrontation politics.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Clark:** The government admits through the throne speech that inflation is still a serious problem. However it forgets to put the problem within its economic context which is considerably greater and more disturbing for Canadians than for this government. There is no indication in this speech that the government admits the slowness of the recovery and the evidence that we are far from achieving our economic potential. In reading it, no one can detect the fact that Canada is facing a serious problem of balance of payments and that its

competitive position on international markets is continually eroding.

[*English*]

The government asserts its concern about inflation, yet nowhere does it acknowledge that it controls the most basic price of all, the price of money, and that interest rates in this country remain at extremely high inflationary levels. Indeed, we are treated in the name of a housing policy to a rerun of that old cliché about one million starts every four years, when anyone who has cared enough to talk to young Canadian families knows that the main problem today is not finding a house, but is finding the money to finance a mortgage.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** I presume the Prime Minister is out talking to Canadians again, and if there is one thing I wish to congratulate him on it is on getting out and rediscovering the country. He usually does it once every four years, but the polls changed rather quickly this time. I understand that in doing that he concedes he is following my lead, and I trust that he will get accustomed to doing that.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** I note, Sir, that in a flush of uncharacteristic frankness he announced in New Brunswick the other day that the only way the Liberals can win the next election is by a miracle. I have been out campaigning in Ottawa-Carleton and in St. John's West, as the Prime Minister conspicuously has not been, and I can assure him that he will need more than a miracle there. I should say we at least do not really believe he is in that league anyway.

● (1530)

But, Sir, if we can take the Prime Minister's suggested itinerary as being the gospel, to continue the analogy, he is planning a miracle for next week. Just as soon as the results from the two by-elections become known he will disappear. I understand there is unanimity in his cabinet that he should go to Japan. The only argument was about whether or not he should return.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** It is not unusual for a throne speech to be obscure or imprecise, but this speech is much more than that. This speech is misleading. It uses soothing words to try to deny the direction in which the government has been carrying the country. It praises consultation when the government's consistent position has been to act unilaterally. It talks about "a reliance on the market to stimulate growth" when this government, through delays and threats and constant changes, has done more than any other agency to inhibit that kind of growth.

It talks about reducing the number of public servants and is silent about the increasing number of consultants the govern-