

The Address—Mr. Clark

sible for our economic woes. After the Arab sheiks, after the world economy, now the Quebec government is being held responsible for the economic crisis. Let me merely remind the minister that very recently the *Wall Street Journal* stated that the economic problems in Canada were not the result of the election of a Péquiste government, but that, on the contrary, its election was precipitated by the economic crisis we are now going through.

Mr. Speaker, this government must stop blaming each and everyone for all our problems; it must recognize that it has and must assume prime responsibility for the economy of the country.

[English]

Clearly, the minister has to introduce positive measures to stimulate economic activity. We in this party think there should be a budget now. Parliament should have been called back last month for a budget which would stimulate growth in this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: We should be moving out of controls now, and not next year. There should be tax cuts now for Canadians earning \$16,000 and less. The government should be in active consultation with the provinces about cutting the sales tax in order to stimulate consumer demand. There should be an investment tax credit for Canadians who want to invest in Canadian small business. There need to be other tax incentives to encourage research, innovation and development across the country, particularly in regions of slower growth.

Let us be clear that the economic problems facing this country are much larger and much deeper than short-term tax cuts, important as they may be. We are in an economic mess because Canadians, and indeed the world, have lost confidence in the economic management of this country. This government, in less than a decade, has erased a reputation for economic soundness and stability which had taken Canada a century to build up.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: It is hardly thoughtful or responsible to try, as the minister has, to pin on the provinces primary responsibility for taking action to meet our unemployment crisis. Certainly, his comments so far on the fall of our dollar have not been marked by much thought or responsibility, I regret to say. The minister's position is that the dollar is floating—just floating, period. If you add \$500 million in water wings from the Bank of Canada, you do not have a floating dollar. Perhaps the minister does not understand that, or perhaps he wants to mislead Canadians as to just how serious is this situation. He most certainly does not help that position one iota by talking as if the government does not care to what level the dollar floats. That is an open invitation to currency speculation. The Canadian people expect the minister to take charge of the situation, and not hand it over to the gnomes of Zurich.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Clark.]

Mr. Clark: Let me implore the minister not to delude himself and not to delude Canadians into believing that it is good for Canada to have our dollar sliding on world money markets. That might mean short-term benefits for our exporters, but as experience in countries like Britain and Italy has shown, devaluing the currency is no answer to basic economic problems. That idea went to 20 years ago. The minister has to deal with today's reality.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: No one speech by the minister, whether he calls it a budget or simply treats it as one, and no one series of tax changes is going to turn that situation around. It has taken this government ten years to ruin Canada's reputation. It will take time to restore it. Ultimately, the only means by which the reputation of Canada can be restored is for there to be a change, not only in policy but a fundamental change in government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: This minister can at least make a start tomorrow night. He has been a senior member of this government for most of the period in which our reputation has been ruined. If he is to be successful, he will need the support of his Prime Minister, just as the nation needs to know in a definite, clear way the views of the Prime Minister on economic matters.

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I think it is fair to say that the Prime Minister's musings on television, his casual talk of discipline, his suggestion on Monday that controls might stay for some time as a weapon which the government would want to use—those statements from the head of the government of Canada have had a high cost in confidence for Canadian investors and for the Canadian economy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: The Prime Minister cannot shift this burden to the Minister of Finance. The Prime Minister himself is so much a cause of this problem that I challenge him, in the speech he will be making today, to accept his obligations and to address the fundamental economic problems which this country faces, and to spell out precisely his views, as the Prime Minister of Canada, of the Canadian economy, of the relation between government and the private sector in this country, and to spell out precisely and in detail the kind of discipline he is prepared to impose upon himself and upon his colleagues in the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: We are all concerned about keeping this country together and we are all, I think, beginning to realize now—we recognized it some time ago, and now it is seeping over to the other side—that there is not going to be any permanent means of keeping Canadians together until our economy is in order. We have to address our economic problems as being the most