

*The Budget—Mr. Clark*

are Canadians. It is my view that there is an obligation upon the government to start treating them like Canadians and to stop building in policies which give advantages to Texans, Oklahomans and the citizens of OPEC countries, advantages which should be given to the citizens of this country so that we can get on with building Canada.

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

**Mr. Clark:** One of the matters which is most troubling to us here is that it would be absolutely unthinkable, as I have had occasion to say outside the House, for any government deliberately to fashion a policy against the basic interests of the province of Quebec. That would be unthinkable anywhere in this House by any party here, but it should be equally unthinkable for the Government of Canada to design a policy directly against the basic interests of any other province or region of this country. Yet, that is what this policy does. This is not a Canadian policy; this is an anti-Alberta policy, an anti-British Columbia policy, an anti-Saskatchewan policy. This is not a policy designed to build on the strengths of this country. This is a policy designed to cause division in the country, perhaps for political reasons, perhaps for constitutional reasons, but certainly not for reasons of accomplishing our economic goals or realizing our energy potential.

In the budget speech the Minister of Finance, reading what was written for him by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, indicated that his government had the magnanimity to change positions on two questions of principle. One was indexing. He admitted that he listened to the protests against his plan to take indexing away from the poor of Canada, protests which came from this party. He said he listened to those, so he has delayed his plan for a year. He has amended his budget, he has amended his plan by leaving indexing in for at least one more year. The other is his claim that because of the protests of western provinces, particularly British Columbia, he has changed the export tax on natural gas. All he has changed is the name of the export tax on natural gas. The point is that if the Minister of Finance was prepared to change his position on indexing, if he was prepared to change at least the language which he used to describe an export tax on natural gas, why would he not now be prepared to sit down and seriously consider—and have his Prime Minister seriously consider—the offer by the Premier of Alberta before we proceed to the next stage in confrontation orchestrated by the federal government, to sit down premier-to-Prime Minister—“don't take Marc Lalonde” —

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

**An hon. Member:** Order.

**Mr. Clark:** —to sit down premier-to-Prime Minister to see if some new agreement could be worked out. That was the proposal put by the Premier of Alberta. One has to wonder, if it was put by another premier, whether it would have been more warmly responded to. In any event it was put by the Premier of Alberta, and the Prime Minister of Canada rejected it, saying it would be inconvenient for him to sit down with

the premier to try to avoid a confrontation which could be deeply damaging to this country. The Prime Minister has put his personal convenience to the fore far too long. It would be convenient to Canada to get on with developing our energy potential. It would be convenient to Canada to stop these federally-orchestrated feuds with the provinces. It would be convenient to Canada to make this nation work, and I suggest that is the obligation of the present government.

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

**Mr. Clark:** Yesterday I told the Minister of Finance I would be pleased to show him and the people of Canada how the government had betrayed its election promise to keep energy prices to the consumers of Canada lower than we proposed last December. Let me start with the current year. We proposed an increase of \$4 per barrel in wellhead prices. On Tuesday night the minister added 80 cents per barrel to the \$3 per barrel increase already in place and to the 75-cent increase already made in the Syncrude levy. That means for the year 1980 the government is increasing the wellhead price of oil by \$4.55 per barrel, more than 10 per cent higher than the \$4 increase we proposed. I remember, as I am sure the people of Canada will, the promises of the Prime Minister that the price would not rise above \$4 per barrel. At that time we said that that promise was worth as much as his earlier promise never to bring in wage and price controls. Now we have the proof that he is as trustworthy in 1980 as he was in 1974, because the Liberal government, having promised solemnly not to raise prices higher than \$4 per barrel, has raised them \$4.55 per barrel; another broken promise.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

● (1600)

**Mr. Clark:** In the next three years the minister is proposing \$4.50 a barrel, the same rate that we set out ten months ago. And what is their ultimate ceiling on prices? It is 85 per cent of world or U.S. prices, which is precisely the same ceiling which we set ten months ago. In fact it is a full 10 per cent higher than the ceiling which the Premier of Alberta offered this government in July. That is a question for this government. In energy negotiations it is one area in which they succeeded more than we. They got the government of Alberta down to a 75 per cent level, but then they threw it away.

The province of Alberta was prepared to agree to a lower ceiling. This government insist on a higher ceiling. Why do they want to expose the industries of Ontario, Quebec and all of Canada to higher energy costs than those which could have been achieved? Why do they insist on a higher ceiling than the government of Alberta was prepared to agree to? What sense does it make? I hope the ministers and members opposite will respond to this question, particularly the Minister of Labour (Mr. Regan), who is here and who represents low-income constituents. He represents them at least for the time being.

I hope that they will indicate to this House why it was that this government insist upon a higher ceiling than the government of Alberta was prepared to accept. Why is there that