

I think this is unfortunate. This government, though Liberal in name, is essentially socialist in nature and is being encouraged by a party which calls itself the New Democratic Party, and which is not socialist in name but is socialist in reality. When we see this kind of attitude I think it is time for those who believe in the free enterprise system in Canada to stand up and be counted. It is time we stopped being apologetic for the system that has given us our present prosperity, and started laying a few facts on the line.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Our present troubles too.

Mr. Stevens: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) speaks about our present problems. Who in this House would know better than he why we are in this present predicament? It was his party, in conjunction with the minority government of the emperor himself, that seeded the expansion in our monetary system and fiscal system that gave us the inflation we are now living with, gave us our high interest rates, and caused the lack of real growth. In short, it was that little partnership that surfaces periodically that has ravished this country, and it was particularly hard on the poor to whom the NDP like to pretend to be the great protectors—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Stevens: After I am through, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stevens: Obviously the hon. member is not used to direct answers.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am used to courtesy.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, it was only yesterday that we were questioning the government about why it saw fit to commit possibly \$1.4 billion to the takeover of Pacific Petroleum, Ltd., bearing in mind that it will not bring in one extra barrel of oil to Canada and will not create one more job. Does it not reflect the true attitude of my colleagues to my left that their leader stood up and said that was the type of question that makes the government look progressive, in the sense that the government was doing something progressive by the takeover of a free enterprise company such as Pacific Petroleum?

Perhaps I should mention that I think we have to start taking a new message to the Canadian public, a message of new hope. I think we have to acknowledge that although in Ottawa we are buffeted with requests for the government of the day to do this or that, there is always the assumption that government action is needed and that such action will be beneficial. Rarely is it suggested that often the best thing for governments to do is just nothing. Rarely is it realized that the government does not create wealth.

Borrowing Authority Act

Mr. McKenzie: Just debt.

Mr. Stevens: To me that is the crux of what we have under review. As my colleague has just said, the government in this case does not create wealth but it sure knows how to create debt.

The socialists on the one hand, with almost religious zeal, feel that more government involvement can help solve our problems, while the statist, particularly the present government, crave power for the sake of power. It is in this atmosphere that I want to suggest a really new thought to most members of the House. I suggest it is perhaps a brand new thought for those to my left, and for many on the government side it is something that, if they ever thought of it, they have tended to forget. It is an idea that we appeared, a decade ago, to have turned away from, with the election of the emperor we have in Canada. Yet it is an idea which once turned a raw and underdeveloped continent of poverty stricken colonies into two of the richest nations on earth—Canada and the United States.

It is a concept which, invented 200 years ago in England and then fuelled by the individual dreams of millions of immigrants, became the most forceful engine for the creation of wealth and prosperity the world has ever seen. That idea, of course, is the free-enterprise system. I know that over the past decade it has become fashionable to portray the free enterprise system as simply the pursuit of shallow materialism, as the socialists would say, by "Greedy, selfish and self-serving men." In contrast, socialism and the centralist philosophies have been portrayed as a new form of egalitarianism—of people living for society and for each other. This concept, though widespread and popular, is based in myth, and not in fact. The sooner we start laying a few of the particular facts on the record of this House, the better.

The central planners rarely admit, as they seek power in the name of the people, that it is power for themselves they seek. To the extent we give them that power we lessen our freedoms.

We should be encouraged to note that in recent polling in the United States, 90 per cent agreed with this statement, "We must be ready to make sacrifices if necessary to preserve the free enterprise system. In 1976, almost three-quarters disapproved of the view that "the country would be better off if big businesses were taken over by the government as in certain European countries."

Throughout mankind's civilized history, central control of national economies has been the rule, not the exception. That is often forgotten, Mr. Speaker, so let me repeat it—throughout mankind's civilized history, central control of national economies has been the rule, not the exception. In each case central planning has not proven successful, and as the centrally planned state has faltered, tyranny has increased, with people becoming more and more the serfs or vassals of the state. That is what the socialists want to put us back to.

● (1622)

The free enterprise or capitalistic system, as we know it, is unique in the 4,600 years of mankind's experience. For the first 44 centuries of our civilized existence, we find that the