

The Address—Mr. Neil

very regressive tax. It hurts those people who can least afford it, as is the nature of most sales and user taxes.

Mr. Epp: Why did you raise it in Manitoba, then?

Mr. Murphy: What we would prefer is that if we are going to have Canadian ownership, we look at different methods of accomplishing that. I come back to the question which I asked the Hon. Member. Is the Hon. Member's Party in favour of Canadian ownership of our oil industry, or does it want to continue the present situation, which is an embarrassment to our nation, of having control and ownership exercised offshore?

Second, what is the position of the Conservative Party with regard to PetroCan? What is the latest position under the new Leader of that Party?

Mr. Neil: The Hon. Member talks of regressive taxes. He does not talk about the increase of sales tax in Manitoba by the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Murphy: It is almost as much as Ontario.

Mr. Neil: It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) was not in the House when the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) spoke. That Hon. Member talked about the Pacific Rim countries, about China and some of the other socialist countries. He indicated that they are developing a mix, that they have finally come to understand that socialism will not work on its own. They also understand that foreign investment is necessary. If you drive out foreign investment, then your country is in trouble.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I have a short question of privilege. I have been in the House since the bells rang at eleven o'clock this morning and did hear the speech of the Conservative Hon. Member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): That is debate, of course; it is not a question of privilege. Does the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw want to make any further comment?

Mr. Neil: I simply want to apologize, if the Hon. Member was here, and say that if he was here, he was not listening.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I have a very brief question I would like to direct to the previous speaker. I would point out that I, as well, listened to the presentation of the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) and found it wanting in sufficient content. I believe many others found that as well. However, it certainly did not apply directly to the question which was asked of the Hon. Member of the Conservative Party, of that Party's Leader and of its energy critic. That Party has to get off the pot on this issue.

Mr. Epp: Order.

Mr. Skelly: First of all, Imperial Oil does not contribute foreign investment from Exxon. It bleeds this country. The

question is where does the Conservative Party stand on foreign ownership and foreign control and the fact that those corporations are pumping money out of this country? Have those Hon. Members not read the Bertrand Commission report? Do they not understand what the real issues are? They should get up and answer the questions for a change instead of waffling.

Mr. Neil: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member who just spoke has perhaps not read the report of Mr. Laxer on his Party.

Some Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Neil: I am not speaking on behalf of the Party at the moment when I make this comment: I went through four elections and in nearly all of those elections the candidate of the New Democratic Party who ran against me kept talking about "corporate welfare bums", foreign ownership and so on. My answer to that was that these companies who were doing business in Canada have been doing business according to the law of the land. If the law is wrong, the law should be changed. We invite people in and if they obey the law, in my opinion that is sufficient.

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I can well appreciate the dilemma of the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly), although I am not sure his dilemma is as genuine as he would have us believe. I believe he knows the answer to the question he put to the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) with respect to where the Tories stand on foreign ownership. That Party stands squarely in favour of foreign ownership. Its Leader is owned by Cleveland. I am sure the Hon. Member is in no doubt as to where the Tories stand on foreign ownership. Their policies are a virtual branch plant of the United States administration at the moment. Let there be no doubt where the Tories stand on foreign ownership. They do not have a stand on much, but on that they do have a stand.

It is a pleasant Monday morning, however, Mr. Speaker, so let us talk about something positive like the Throne Speech which we heard on December 7. Throne Speeches generally have a reputation for being vague and general and short on specifics. This particular Throne Speech stands out as the exception to that particular rule. It is not vague. It has to deal with some generalities, of course, but it is not at all short on specifics.

I believe there has never been under any administration a Throne Speech which has spelled out in such detail how the Government proposes to build on a very solid base of achievement. This Throne Speech spells out for us a program to consolidate the gains which have been made as a nation over the past three or so years. We have made gains in reducing inflation. The Speech from the Throne proposes how we will build on that very important gain, the gain of reducing inflation substantially over the last three years.

We have begun to develop a competitive industrial base. We propose now to build on that important gain. We have maintained the social safety net at a time when countries in the