

—will he reconsider and suspend the government's present policy of restraint and cutback which is only increasing unemployment insurance payments and welfare expenditures?

The minister's reply to that was to say that he had no intention of introducing exchange controls at that time!

I have asked several questions since that time. I still have not received the answer I want, which might explain why I have decided to leave. However, I do want to pay tribute particularly to the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), the Minister of Justice and the current Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) for their courtesy to me as the finance critic for our party. Perhaps I should preface that by saying "personal courtesy" to me, because my political differences with these ministers are, of course, a matter of record.

When I came here the Liberal Party was on its last legs.

Mr. Epp: Still is.

Mr. Nielsen: No change.

Mr. Rae: It had become the captive of a neo-conservative ideology. It was desperately afraid of an election. The Conservative Party had the distinction of having five finance critics, not just one, and all I can say is that when I arrived here I was very green and wet behind the ears. The point of those three remarks is that perhaps nothing changes at all.

In closing, I want to thank you, Madam Speaker, for your courtesy, to thank the officers at the Table for their help, to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms and to thank all the staff of this House of Commons, the people who make this place work and make it the wonderful place it is.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I should like to say a few words to express my heartfelt thanks to the constituents in my riding of Broadview-Greenwood, to those who worked with me in the party, to those in the other parties who worked together with us for the future and welfare of our country. I wish to thank you, Madam Speaker, and all the senior officials of the House of Commons for their friendship, their assistance and the work they have done, all of which has been a great help to me in my own work.

[*English*]

Finally—and I am sure hon. members will understand when I say this—my deepest thanks of all go, of course, to my family, whose indulgence, support and love have made it possible for me to be a Member of Parliament and to have spent so much time away from them. My family has participated with me in the tremendously rewarding life which is the life of a politician.

● (1510)

Since I am not retiring from politics, Madam Speaker, quite the contrary, I do not regard this as a tremendously nostalgic event. I want to close, along with a book I read recently, by saying that what is past is prologue. I want to thank you and to

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thank hon. members for your friendship and help these past years.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I have never been elected in Broadview-Greenwood; in fact, I have never run for office in Broadview-Greenwood, but somehow I feel very close to that riding. I want to tell the hon. member that I intend to take a great deal of interest in it in the weeks and months ahead and perhaps to spend a great deal of time there.

Mr. Broadbent: That is good news for us!

Mr. Kaplan: I have been in one more election than my hon. friend and I have sat in one more Parliament than he has. I want to make the observation that this has been a particularly bitter Parliament for all of us—very partisan, with lots of confrontation and difficult moments. At a time like this, which comes infrequently, we have the opportunity to share a common bond—Liberals, Conservatives and New Democratic Party alike—in the service of our country from the various perspectives we bring to this place.

I can say for my party that it has been an experience for us to sit opposite the hon. member and watch his performance over the years that he has been here. To borrow a very traditional line, as he leaves this place to continue his political battles, Madam Speaker, we wish him well—but not too well!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I should like very much to respond on behalf of the "five official opposition finance critics" that the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) referred to. I, too, would like to wish him the best, though I am not sure the best of what. On behalf of the Conservative Party, however, I can say that we would like to wish him long tenure in his office as leader of one of the opposition parties in the province of Ontario.

On a serious note—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson: Madam Speaker, I think I have stunned the House! We would like to wish the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood the best of everything in his new position. We understand the tremendous responsibilities he has taken on. I am sure the experience he has gained in this House and all the good friends he has here will serve him well in his new career.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: I want to add a few words to those that have been spoken by hon. members in the House today. Of course, we are all a bit sorry when someone decides to leave the House, and that applies to the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood who has carved a place for himself here.