

The Address—Mr. Blaikie

their premises. The money went to wages and I agreed with that, it was a good idea. A great many Members on both sides of the House would say that some of those projects added nothing to the economy of the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We shall now continue with debate, the period for questions and comments having expired. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie).

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon, as the environment critic for the New Democratic Party, to make a few comments about that whole area of concern. Many Members in the House will know that I was previously the health critic for my Party. I view my new responsibilities as environment critic as being in continuity with the work that I did over the last four and a half years as health critic. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this continuity would be to remind the House that when the Canada Health Act was in committee I moved an amendment to the preamble of the Act, which was accepted, and which acknowledged the amendment that improvements in the well-being of Canadians would not be forthcoming until the social, environmental and occupational causes of disease were addressed. Although nothing happened overnight, I hope that by adding that to the preamble of the Canada Health Act we achieved some kind of conceptual victory where, by virtue of that legislation and by virtue of many other things which are being said in that direction, we will come to realize, when talking about the well-being of Canadians, that we must take into account the environmental dimension of every problem.

I am also happy to be taking on this new area of concern because it is closer to the reasons for which I entered politics. I was among those in the late sixties and early seventies who began to think about the question of limits—limits to the kind of growth that was being experienced, and the environmental dimension of our problems. I can think of several books which were influential at that time, most of which continue to be good reading even though some of the statistics are out of date. One of those books was *Limits to Growth*, published by the Club of Rome. Other books which had quite an impact on me were the *The Making of a Counter-Culture* by Theodore Roszak, the *Technological Society* by Jacques Ellul, up to and including, more recently, the further works of Theodore Roszak, and the works of Hazel Henderson, Richard Barnet, Lester Brown, Barbara Ward, Barry Commoner, and the list goes on. My intention is not to give a bibliography but to attempt to situate myself intellectually and politically as it pertains to the question of the environment.

Finally, I would be amiss if I did not mention a document which was very instructive for me and which came out a short time before I decided to run for office. That document was the Berger report, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline report. I believe that that report is still one of the most fundamental documents in the politics of the environment, the concerns of native people and the economy. I believe that Justice Berger wove together a number of concerns in a way which has not been

superseded. It is too bad that people do not more often refer to that document and that we do not more often see directions based on the kind of philosophy and insight which was so abundant in that particular report.

I see myself as belonging to that school of thought which views our social and economic problems as problems which run deeper than the kind of debate in which we generally engage in the House of Commons. I am referring to longstanding debates between the monetarists, the Keynesians, the neo-Conservatives, the neo-Liberals, the supply-siders, and the demand-siders, all these. It is not as clear to me as I would like, nor to many others, but nevertheless I believe there is some truth in saying that all of these arguments exist within a passing economic paradigm. All of these arguments fail to take into account, in my view, the whole environmental dimension of our economic problems. That is what I would like to spend some time on today.

● (1550)

When we talk about the environmental dimension of our economic problems, we are saying that the environment is not just a kind of middle-class, trendy concern that is a kind of aside to the more central economic debate. We are saying that if we want to be realistic we must come to terms with this dimension of our economic problems as well. That is where we enter the fray with the Government and with its particular economic world view. I have listened to a lot of speeches made by my Progressive Conservative colleagues in the last five and a half years and they seem to be saying that they want Canadians to be more realistic and to face up to tough economic questions. I believe that Canadians have responded to that conceptually, even if they may not like the concrete dimension of the proposals put forward by the Government. That is because Canadians have a sense that something is wrong out there, that there is something tough and real which they must face up to.

However, what I want to debate this afternoon is whether or not what is offered by the Government in its economic statement is in fact realistic and contains the realism at which we must finally arrive if we are going to have a truly human future. The intention is to find out who is the idealist here, Mr. Speaker. Is it the socialists who are often accused of idealism, or is it those who continue to believe that we can continue as we have.

The Conservatives would say that they do not believe we can go on as we have. That is why they believe they must take tough measures with respect to the deficit and get tough in the way indicated by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). But I contend, Mr. Speaker, that this is still a form of the belief that we can go on as we have.

What the Tories are really saying is that we have been off on a sidetrack because of fiscal irresponsibility on the part of the Liberals, and that what we must have is some fiscal responsibility to get back to where we were before there was this aberration called "excessive Government spending", so we can have again the kind of economic growth we experienced