

The Address—Mr. Broadbent

years. If ever I heard a banal political sermon, Mr. Speaker, it was this afternoon.

People like Helmut Schmidt in West Germany, or Olof Palme in Sweden, or even the President of France who is not a social democrat, or the Prime Minister of Japan who is not a social democrat, are people in very divergent economies who do not sit back and say that their people are at fault, that somehow they are not being as productive as they should, that they are being outpriced in world markets, and then convince themselves that they have made a brilliant argument.

I said to the Prime Minister that he was hurling banal platitudes when he was making his speech, and I repeat that now. There is no argument there. There is a mere assertion of claims, a mere rattling off of statistics. In all seriousness, I say that if we are now in this state in Canada, if we are in the kind of economic situation we are in—as indeed we are—there is only one group in this country which must bear prime responsibility, and that is the government over there.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: In asking, Mr. Speaker, where they have been for ten years, I go back to last spring's budget. I do not go back ten years, but just a few months. Where is the economic competence? The Prime Minister sort of hurls at the official opposition and the NDP, "Who are you guys to really know what you are talking about?" The government produced a budget last spring which is a disgrace in the modern world. If the Prime Minister and his cabinet had any integrity, they would get up and say, "We were dead wrong; we made serious errors". Because they did. Every economic indicator, their forecasts of unemployment levels, their forecasts of the rate of inflation and their forecasts of job creation, were dead wrong in that budget. Their economic analysis was that the manufacturing sector was operating at 80 per cent capacity.

My party does not object to profits, but we do not accept the simple-minded argument of the Prime Minister. If you have a private sector, of course you accept profits. Again I urge him to talk to the social democratic prime ministers of Western Europe. Instead of producing a budget which recognized that we had only 80 per cent capacity being utilized in the manufacturing sector, and saying that the economic conclusion which you deduce from that is not to expand your capital facilities but to expand consumer demand, he did the opposite. He offered a \$1.2 billion tax incentive to the corporate sector to overexpand.

Businessmen are not stupid, Mr. Speaker. If General Motors has already 20 per cent unused capacity, you can be damned sure they will not overexpand some more to have 40 per cent unused capacity. So we said then, and I repeat now, that that \$1.2 billion tax concession to the corporations is objectionable to us, not because it was a tax concession to the corporate sector—anyone in his right mind in the modern world knows that you have to have a tax policy for corporations—but because it was the wrong policy at the wrong time. If it was wrong last spring when we were operating at 80 per cent

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capacity, it is equally wrong this fall when we are operating at only 83 per cent capacity.

From the throne speech yesterday we learned that the government is going to bring back again that piece of economic nonsense. A legitimate question posed rhetorically from time to time by the Prime Minister is, "What would you do, you wise guys over there who make all your criticisms?"

● (1802)

The economic issue bothers me, and I will get to that. In his argument today, the Prime Minister very deliberately contrasted the economy with national unity, which is his traditional fashion. On the one hand we have national unity which is a problem, and on the other hand there is the economy, according to the Prime Minister. They cannot be separated in that way. If I understood the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark), he was saying the same thing. One involves the other.

The Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport), the hon. member for Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo), said to me, when we were talking about unemployment last night, that in her riding in the province of British Columbia there is 30 per cent unemployment. I am not giving away any secret. In northern Ontario, 4,000 or 5,000 are laid off in Sudbury. In southern Ontario, from community to community—and I mean from Windsor in the west right through to Ste Thérèse, Quebec, in the east—some 20,000 additional jobs could be created for Canadians. Some 20,000 jobs could be created, and not on the basis of some airy-fairy, long range scheme but simply on the basis of this government doing its job. If it lives up to the requirements of the auto pact if it did not give over \$300 million in write-offs to the automotive companies—which was done in the last few years—and if it did not fail to meet the job requirements, we might have 20,000 jobs.

You can move in every province in Canada, sector after sector, and find problems. I should like to say what we can do with some of them. The Prime Minister, in the Speech from the Throne, was so disturbing to me—and, I am sure, to hundreds of thousands of Canadians—because there was no indication that the government recognizes what is required in some sectors. For example, there is fishing in Atlantic Canada. Why do we not establish what the fishermen have been calling for down there—a national marketing board for fish? If it is good for our wheat farmers in the prairies, and if it has produced sales for our families in the prairies in the agricultural sector, surely a national marketing board is good in the fishing sector. The fishermen of the east coast want it. Why do they not get it?

Dealing with the textile industry, 60 per cent of the workers in Canada live and work in the province of Quebec, and it is in trouble. We say that what you should do in that sector is to put a freeze for at least three years on the level of imports as they were coming in in 1975. Three years would give us time to modernize the industry and do something about it to create long-range jobs.