

Finance

Mr. Elzinga: In an article in the November 27, 1976, *Canadian* magazine Richard Gwyn amplified the kind of leadership the Prime Minister has given us when he wrote:

Canadians, he (Trudeau) said in 1970, must exercise discipline and set aside trinkets like electric toothbrushes. Then he flew off to join the Aga Khan aboard his yacht in the Adriatic.

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The Prime Minister has mismanaged the economic affairs of this country to such an extent that he has proved he has no answers to Canada's economic problems. We have had three finance ministers who have failed to bridge the gap between our economic difficulties and the Prime Minister's indifference. Canadians are beginning to believe that there is no solution to this economic mess, and who can blame them when the Prime Minister ignores the situation?

There are answers, Mr. Speaker, and we in this party have offered them to the Canadian people. The Progressive Conservative party, through the voice of our leader, has given clear alternatives and has charted the course that will lead Canada back to economic growth and to confidence in the Canadian economy.

On December 24, 1970 the Prime Minister told the Canadian people that inflation no longer existed, that he had wrestled it to the ground. He said he had cured the problem. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the problem has not been cured. The only thing the Prime Minister has wrestled to the ground in this country is private investment.

In another interview on December 28, 1975 the Prime Minister stated that Canada had not been able to make the free market system work, that the government would have to play a larger role in running our institutions and that there is going to be more authority in our lives. Yet when the premiers came together for the recent economic conference in Ottawa, the Prime Minister said exactly the opposite. We cannot believe the words we hear from this man because he contradicts himself so often.

Let me compare his statements with those of our leader, who on May 11, 1977 in Toronto said that during the past decade we have wasted away our economic strength. He said Canada now has a larger portion of its economy devoted to services, including government, than any other western nation. He said that every fifth Canadian worker is employed directly or indirectly by government, that governments' share of the gross national product, the unproductive portion of our gross national product, has doubled in the last decade to 43 per cent.

The trend today is to less government involvement. We find that the policies we have advocated through the many years are now being adopted by the present Liberal administration simply because they are finding that they are being accepted by the Canadian people.

On the issue of unemployment I wish to share with you, Mr. Speaker, statements which the two leaders of our major parties have made. The Prime Minister said that there are people on unemployment insurance who prefer not to work, and they have a perfect right to make that decision. He said a man who

[Mr. Benjamin.]

lives in society should be able to enjoy his own possibilities to the maximum, but work is perhaps not the way to do it.

Let me compare that with the statement made by the leader of our party. He said the current unemployment insurance system is wasteful, inefficient, and in many cases a practical disincentive to work. He said that young people are going to develop attitudes to jobs that are very unhealthy in the long term, and that we will be paying the social cost for years to come. The Leader of the Opposition said that in the next four years we are going to have to provide jobs for more than a million people who are not now in the labour force, and that we have to have economic growth in this country so we can find nearly two million jobs. We in this party are committed to that, Mr. Speaker.

I am not sure how much time I have left, Mr. Speaker, but I wish to share with you a few excerpts from a book that has been researched and compiled by Edward Murphy called "A Legacy of Spending". In so many ways the back cover of this book exemplifies the problem of Canada's economic situation: the headline is "Federal spending still out of control".

The major difficulty we in Canada are facing is that the federal government has lost control of its spending. I wish to give the House some examples of that. In this publication there is an article dated January 17, 1974 in which a member of our party, our present national president, indicated to the House that the Prime Minister has spent \$61,000 on office furnishings in his office in Ottawa. He has spent some \$297,000 on his own home. This is paid for by our taxpayers. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) flies around the country at great expense to the taxpayer but advocates user-pay when it comes to the carriage of freight.

Another area in which the government is deeply lacking is moral leadership. I want to refer the House to certain Canada Council grants, of which many prime examples are given in this book, but first let me put on the record some of the expenses incurred by the Prime Minister's office at a time when he was telling Canadians they must exercise restraint. Certainly he showed none himself. The cost of operation of the Prime Minister's office for the year 1977-78 is \$2,500,000.

Mr. Benjamin: Fire them all.

Mr. Elzinga: That is what we plan on doing after the next election. Let me compare that with the year 1968-69 when the cost was only \$767,000. I am amazed how the government can preach restraint yet not exercise it.

On returning to the lack of moral leadership, we find that through Young Canada works the government has financed a documentary film on homosexuals to the tune of \$6,600. This is how our government is spending our money.

An hon. Member: It has to be the Liberals.

Mr. Elzinga: Yes, it has to be the Liberals. An article reprinted from the *Vancouver Sun* for September 2, 1972 carries the headline, "Are gays urging boy seduction with federal money?" That is the kind of thing Canada Works