

### Supply

The next part of this so-called program of action was expanded opportunities for youth. The Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) referred to the desperate plight of young people today. Approximately 660,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are out of work. They are the lost generation, lost from any care of concern that the Government would direct toward them.

The third part of the so-called program of action was equality for women. It is there in words. Although the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's did not recognize it, Clause 28 was inserted in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by the combined efforts of the Opposition Parties, not by anything the Government did. It is there in words but it is not carried out in action. Today women in the country earn only half of what the average male earns—\$7,600 per year compared with \$14,981. Until there is economic equality, there is no such thing as real equality for women.

There was the fourth part of that program for action, a national development policy that would provide jobs and stimulate growth. Three years ago there were a million Canadians out of work. Today there are two million, and of that two million, as the Hon. Member for St. John's East said, a million are long-term unemployed having been without jobs for more than three and a half months. In the last year alone over half a million jobs have been lost from the labour force and our growth rate has dropped immeasurably.

Back in 1980 the Government intoned the following words, "all these commitments will be kept, these pledges redeemed, the mandate fulfilled". What a sick, cruel joke the Government of the day perpetrated on the Canadian public, just as the Government itself is a sick, cruel joke, particularly to the two million Canadians who are out of work and to whom the Prime Minister had the gall to say last week, the economy was performing very well. Who does he think he is kidding?

However, there is one statement in this Throne Speech which was prescient. It read:

—Canadians will accept sacrifice to meet the economic challenges of the 1980s, but they will not accept injustice.

Indeed, Canadians have had to accept sacrifices, the like of which they have never been called upon to accept before. In the past few years they have had to accept the sacrifice of losing jobs, of losing homes and of seeing families break up, all because of the inability of the Government to carry out the economic pledges it made to Canadians three years ago. Indeed, these two million Canadians who are out of work and these hundreds of thousands who have lost their homes, who have become the sacrificial lambs which the Government has seen fit to offer up on its altar of high interest rates and nationalization. Indeed, they have had to sacrifice.

What the Government said in the Throne Speech about calling upon Canadians to sacrifice has indeed been carried out, but not in the way the Government intended, and certainly

not in the way the people of the country anticipated when they heard the Throne Speech three years ago.

There is a certain sick, black humour to all this because the section to which I refer in the Throne Speech was headed up with the title the Government chose to give it, "Putting People First". It has put them first all right. The elderly were commandeered as the front-line troops in the fight against inflation. Young people were marched out by the hundreds of thousands to join the ranks of the unemployed. The concept of family was attacked by the Minister responsible for the status of women who made such unbelievable statements as: "What contribution is she" —a homemaker— "making to society if they are childless", or "Do you, a working woman, want to pay so that someone else can stay at home", and she called staying at home "a luxury". These are the things that have emanated from putting people first according to the Government, putting them first in a very different way than Members on this side of the House would regard putting people first.

There are a couple of specific commitments the Government made in those heady days of April 1980 when it was lusting for power. The Government promised—and the Prime Minister and his colleagues made a big thing of it during the election campaign—to carry out pension reform. The Throne Speech played up that theme with these words:

Work must begin immediately to design better methods of providing flexible, portable, and secure pensions both in the private and public sectors. To start this process, my Government will soon release a major study on the Canadian pension system.

That was in April 1980. We now know what the Government meant by soon. It took them two and a half years to release a study on pension reform, a paper which I might add was rewritten a number of times and downgraded in its urgency.

According to the Throne Speech the Government promised to start work immediately on improving the income retirement system in the country. Today, three years later, a parliamentary Committee has finally been set up to start that job, once again to study the process of pension reform, a process which many of us consider to be the greatest and most urgent social need of the 1980s. The Committee has begun its work. It is scheduled to present its recommendations at the end of 1983. When those recommendations are presented to the Government, I presume they will be subject to a thorough and intensive period of review by Cabinet. Subsequently there will have to be a series of federal-provincial meetings about them because pension reform is a shared jurisdiction. Then legislation will have to be drafted and debated, all of which takes time. The way the Government moves, it will take weeks and months of time. It would seem that in speaking of the urgency and the immediacy of pension reform in the last election campaign the Government was really looking to the next election campaign.