

S.O. 21

Canadians are willing to work together to solve the problems that we face in our country. They took the first step in reversing the negative trend that has plagued our country by electing a new Government committed to bringing about real change.

Voters entrusted our Government with a mandate to lead the way in a process of economic renewal and national reconciliation. We have begun to fulfil that mandate, Mr. Speaker. Last week, in the Speech from the Throne and in the economic statement made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), our Government laid the cornerstones for a national reconstruction effort.

In facing up to Canada's serious economic problems, we are all going to have to work hard and we are going to have to make some crucial decisions. The people of the riding of Mission-Port Moody are prepared for these decisions. Already they are responding with enthusiasm to the leadership shown by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Minister of Finance.

Our agenda for change and renewal is based upon consultation and discussion. The Prime Minister began that process today by meeting with the provincial First Ministers. What these people in opposition do not understand, Mr. Speaker, is: "You ain't seen nothing yet".

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POLITICAL PARTIES

ABSTINENCE OF NEW DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS FROM
NON-CONFIDENCE VOTE

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, such was the universal accord and happiness with which the Speech from the Throne and the economic statement were received that the whole country has united in its approval of the policies of the new Government. Even the NDP are in favour of the new policies. Apparently NDP members are not even interested in voting on their own subamendment. On Friday afternoon only three out of the required five NDP members rose when the opportunity presented itself to cause a recorded vote. Therefore, there will be no vote of non-confidence this afternoon.

From that we can only conclude either, first, that 27 out of the 30 NDP members fully support the new Government; second, that the NDP has abandoned its role of opposition by vacating the field to its friends in the Liberal Party; or third, that NDP members would be well advised to reconsider their choice of House Leader and Party Whip.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

CONDEMNATION OF GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

Mr. John V. Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign Conservative candidates promised a more open and accessible Government. The Tories castigated the Liberal Government for secrecy. In their national election propaganda they said:

The Liberals deny Canadians legitimate access to Government. They refuse to release government information. Government must be accountable to the people of Canada. It must be accessible, honest and respectful of different needs and opinions.

What a farce, Mr. Speaker. That is hypocrisy in its highest and purest form. Two months of the Tory version of open and accessible Government have given Canadians a real understanding of the words "duplicity" and "deceit". If its present practices continue, the Conservative Government will clearly be the most secretive and paranoiac Government Canadians have ever witnessed.

The most recent example of this approach came last week with the Finance Minister's refusal to release a study done on the impact his cuts will have on unemployment rates. The public, the press, and the Opposition have a right to this information. We have a right to know how many jobs will be lost. We have a right to know which regions and which sectors of the economy will be most seriously affected.

Why is the Government afraid to release this information? What does it have to hide? Canadians are asking themselves what happened to the promise of more open government.

Mr. Speaker: I must inform the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

EXTERNAL AID

GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and, to my mind, it has to do with the credibility of the Government.

In light of the statement made last week by the Minister of Finance concerning the \$180 million cut in foreign aid which Canada was committed to give to developing countries, how can the Right Hon. Minister explain that, 48 hours earlier, he had authorized his ambassador to the UN to deliver a passionate speech to tell the whole world that Canada would give more foreign aid than any other country and that, 48 hours later, his Government ruthlessly slashed foreign aid programs, when Africa is experiencing the worst famine in many years