

castigates the present government, yet last December 13 in its wisdom his party made the great decision to defeat the government then in power. They would have called that government a disease but, if they were honest, I would bet they would say that the cure is a hell of a lot worse than the disease ever was. Is that correct? I would like an honest answer to that.

Mr. Rae: It is the same disease.

Mr. Knowles: We don't discriminate.

Mr. Darling: I believe all of us, those who are here, and many who are not, are concerned about the way things are going and about high interest rates. I am sure this is true of hon. members from both sides of the House.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Except for the hon. member for Kitchener (Mr. Lang), who wanted to go play squash.

Mr. Darling: The hon. member for Kitchener (Mr. Lang) was here but did not have time to answer the House leader's question. I will concede at least that he was here.

I shall be returning to my riding. I am sure all members on the Conservative side will be returning to their ridings. They will have a much happier Christmas than will hon. members on the government side, who will be facing irate constituents who will ask them in plain, unvarnished language what the hell is going on. They will have to do much more talking than those who were here did tonight. The saintly group to my left will probably have to answer some questions when they go home.

Mr. Rae: No, we will not.

Mr. Darling: With the exception of constituents who are died-in-the-wool socialists they will be told by their constituents how stupid they were to get rid of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and his government, who had some positive ideas, and to let the tribe opposite in again. Hon. members opposite have proved time and again that they are not fit to govern.

I managed to be returned in my riding in February. I won the previous May by a substantial plurality of 8,500 plus, if my memory serves me right. Then last February there was a rejuvenation or resurgence from political death of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), and many people in that great riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka were gullible. I say gullible because over half the people voted against the Clark government. I believe in that election I received only 42 per cent. This week I spoke to a group of substantial businessmen at a Rotary Club meeting in one of the towns in my riding. I did not say this, but I felt like saying that if they are angry about interest rates and yelling blue murder it serves them right. That is it in a nutshell.

Forty-two per cent still had enough faith in me as the member to return me. I wonder what goes through the minds of people who voted for the NDP or the Liberals when they see the present outlandish interest rates. In the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka I felt that the 18-cent gasoline tax was the

thing which people just would not buy. I will be honest, and I usually am—

Mr. Rae: That's right.

Mr. Darling: Do not let me say anything different.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: I call them as I see them. In any event, a great many people felt that that 18 cents was too much. They were given a promise, as if on a stack of Bibles, by the Prime Minister, that paragon of virtue who decided to leave the political scene, who stated right here in this House that he had done enough damage to the country already. Then with the help of the NDP his carcass was revived, and look at the mess we are in today. The NDP would have to agree that when the people voted against the Leader of the Opposition and a great many Conservative candidates throughout the country, they felt that they had been promised and assured that the price of gasoline would remain at about \$1 a gallon or a little less. An hon. member opposite, who is an economic expert, is shaking his head, but that is what the people of Canada thought. They thought the price of gasoline would be \$1 a gallon and would stay there.

Mr. Evans: That is nonsense, and you know it.

Mr. Darling: It is, but the people thought that the price of gasoline would not increase more than 18 cents. They were assured by the eminent Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde). The present Prime Minister swore on a stack of Bibles that the price would not increase more than 18 cents, and now it is up to \$1.40.

It has been mentioned before that there are actually 853,000 unemployed and, as has been rightly been pointed out by members of the NDP, that is a joke—a joke in the sense that the actual figure is as high as 1.3 million, which includes people who have thrown up their hands and given up. I presume they are eking out an existence on welfare today because they have nothing else to do. This is a serious matter, Mr. Speaker. The great Liberal government across the way says it has everything under control and that anything which is not working properly is not its fault. The government blames the problems we have on the sun, the moon, the stars, the United States, this, that, and the other thing—anything but its own inefficiency.

There is no question that the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) is a Machiavellian wizard. He engineered the great Christmas party.

Mr. Turner: You didn't have enough votes; that's all, Stan.

Mr. Darling: Be that as it may, the Minister of Finance now tries to weasel around and give either non-answers or answers which are absolutely ridiculous with respect to the mess we are presently in.

Mr. Benjamin: It is called free enterprise.