

The Address—Rt. Hon. John Turner

We realized the necessity, as the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) said in Question Period, to trigger a further payout of \$500 million in advance payments under the Western Grain Stabilization Plan. The Prime Minister's colleague, the Premier of Saskatchewan, says even that is not enough. When will the Government tell western farmers what they can expect? Where is the promise to remove the 9 per cent federal sales tax on diesel fuel and gasoline used by farmers and fishermen? Where are the 46 specific promises to our multicultural communities? They are not there.

Where are the commitments to regional development, that special assistance to the Atlantic Provinces announced in Halifax? They are not there. Where are the commitments to housing? Housing starts have dropped by 14,000 this October. What does the Government intend to do? Where is the commitment to remove the capital gains tax on the transfer of farm land? Farms in western Canada are immobilized until the Government makes up its mind and the Minister of Finance tells us whether or not that commitment will be fulfilled. Where is the commitment to roll back the freight rate increases on grain for western farmers? Where is the commitment to freeze rail line abandonments?

Mr. Blaikie: You don't want to kill the Crow.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): There were many more promises made which I will not list. They are there. They are not mentioned and they will not be fulfilled.

● (1600)

The point is: it is fine to make grand gestures during election campaigns, but the real acid test begins today. I say to the Prime Minister: "What are you going to deliver to the people of Canada?"

The Minister of Finance just told us today that in his economic statement tomorrow there will be expenditure cuts. We are seeing the plan as it develops, the old one-two punch—first, the Throne Speech to try to soften us up, and then tomorrow the knock-out punch in this financial statement. Maybe when Canadians pick themselves up off the floor on Friday morning we will have at last a clear indication of where the Government will take us.

Tremendous expectations were raised during the campaign. What we are presented with in the Throne Speech is a series of consultations. It is government by study, by seminar. The word "consultation" is used eight times. "Consensus" is mentioned eight times. "Co-operation" is mentioned seven times—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): —but no action. We expected a bold plan of action. We now have a Government which gives us no action but goes into a retreat. They are not monks and we are not living in a monastery. Canadians want action. They do not want contemplation. Canadians do not want studies and they do not want seminars. Perhaps what is most disappointing is that there is really no vision of the future in that Throne Speech. There are no new goals to inspire us,

no new directions in which to lead us. Instead we are presented with a long list of studies, consultations, consensus and process.

That is not leadership. Studies are not action. Process is not an agenda for progress. The Prime Minister and his Party have a massive majority. We can see it in this House. We can see it all around us. Now they are the Government. Now they must face the tough issues and difficult decisions. That is what their role is. That is what the Canadian people put them into office to do, not to study, contemplate, ruminate and meditate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Harry Truman, a former President of the United States, would not have been happy with yesterday's result across the border. However, I commend his words on one occasion to the Prime Minister:

A leader has to lead, or otherwise he has no business in politics.

A government which promised jobs, jobs, jobs is telling 1.5 million unemployed Canadians to wait until spring. They are saying "Go away, give us time; we want to reflect upon it. We cannot talk to you now. Come back next year when we have studied everything".

For this reason I propose, seconded by the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray), the following amendment to the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne:

That the Address be amended by adding the following words:

"But this House condemns your advisers for their failure to demonstrate leadership and to provide plans for immediate action in the creation of tens upon tens of thousands of new jobs".

Mr. Speaker: I have checked the amendment and it appears to the Chair to be in order.

[Translation]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): First, Mr. Speaker, I should like to express my gratitude to the constituents of the riding of Manicouagan where I was born. At a critical, very critical moment in my life, my constituents, my childhood friends and others gave me outstanding support, for which I am deeply grateful today.

[English]

I was touched by the thoughtful and eloquent comments of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) at the beginning of his remarks. Then they went downhill. However, I thank him for his generous and appreciated thoughtful observations. I want to tell him—and I speak with some knowledge as a Quebec Conservative who watched many elections go by—that he should take some heart from the realization that he is now the leader of the largest group of Liberals elected anywhere in the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: It is nice to see his Quebec lieutenant seated exactly where he should be—two sword lengths away.