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various ways more heavily than any other country in the world. We talk about exporting the gas; what about the systems which will use it? I am referring to such systems as electrically powered locomotives, special purpose paper products, agricultural products, drugs, medical diagnostic equipment, or industrial automation systems. I am talking about using that high technology, not just bragging about having a silicon valley of the north here in the Ottawa area to compete with Stanford or MIT or something like that. That is a very narrow application of the concept of high technology; I am talking about something much larger than that.

**Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have a chance to enter into this debate. This is not a unique or unusual debate. Rather, it is along the same lines we have had on so many occasions since I was elected a Member of this House. I am sure it is a familiar theme to a great many Members, and it touches on an area we are all concerned with.

I think I have done this before, but I would like to again issue a challenge to my colleagues in the House. In debates such as this we try to get down to an analysis of the fundamental problems facing the country. We try to put aside the rhetoric and discuss the reasons for our problems. I know some Members will say, as the Hon. Member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon) is doing right now, that the reasons for the problem are the Government. Mr. Speaker, that is pure nonsense. There are fundamental structural problems in our society which we will have to come to grips with if we are to return to a sustained prosperity.

**Mr. Benjamin:** You have had 15 years to do that.

**Mr. Evans:** We have to get down to the fundamental question of why we have inflation in our society; why we have low productivity and chronically high unemployment, and probably, most important of all, why we have unemployment of our youth running in the range of 25 per cent, and what implications this has for our ability to provide advanced social services in the future, or even maintain the level we now enjoy. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that until we really start to come to grips with and debate seriously in this House those fundamental questions and causes of our problems, only then, it seems to me, are we going to be able to begin to find solutions which can be implemented by Government.

● (1520)

It is not good enough to stand here simply and blame Government—to say that it is the Government's fault, that the Government has not done this or the Government has not done that. I believe that all Members of the House understand that that is not good enough. The people of the country understand that that is just shadowboxing, just the political rhetoric of the House of Commons. They are becoming more and more disenchanted with all of us because they do not see us coming to grips with the problems that are of greatest concern to them. They see us standing in the House yelling at one another, pointing the finger and saying that the blame lies here

or there. Assessing blame does not do any of us any good and it does not help people with their problems.

If we are to come to grips with the real problems raised by the Hon. Member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie), we have to be willing to traverse a field that is full of sacred cows that we have been unwilling to deal with. We are going to have to deal with some fundamental social issues that we have not been willing to deal with in the past, because they are socially explosive.

An issue we are addressing in another area of debate is that of capping the indexing of certain social programs. I believe that is the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Speaker. That issue will not go away after the six and five program has been fully implemented. We will have to come to grips with problems such as the intergenerational transfer of funds. It will not be good enough, when the Government tries to come to grips with them, if the response of other Members of the House is to try to make political mileage out of the fundamental issues that have to be dealt with.

At some point in the very near future, if we are to put the recession back on track, we are going to have to come to grips with special interests. We are going to have to step on some toes. If we do not do this together, I do not think we are going to find a Government that is willing to take these hard decisions but if they are not taken, the country will go down the drain.

It seems to me that these are the issues on which the people expect leadership. Where do we want to go as a nation? What is the model of where we want to go? What kinds of major, hard decisions do we have to take to get there? We cannot get there without taking hard decisions. If the Government tries to take some of those hard decisions and receives nothing but condemnation from the other side of the House, then it is going to be very reluctant to take them. I do not care whether it is a Conservative Government, a New Democratic Government or a Liberal Government, it is going to be very reluctant to face those problems. I think we have to start pulling together.

The Hon. Member for Rosedale said that we have to build a national consensus. I agree with him but to do so, we have to build a national consensus in this House of Commons. We can show leadership in building a national consensus. We represent the nation. If we cannot develop a national consensus on how to come to grips with the problems, how can we expect the people of the country to develop a national consensus? It seems to me that we have to come to grips with that.

I think we must begin with the notion that we can only have a rising standard of living if we are willing to become more productive. The Government does not have a bottomless trough. It is no use Members of the Opposition or Members on this side demanding that Ministers put more money in our ridings, not take money from our constituents but from someone else's constituents, yet that is the kind of thing we hear all the time. It puts the Government and Ministers in the position that no matter what they do, they are roundly condemned on all sides.