

The Address—Mr. Wenman

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[*English*]

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Wednesday, October 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Dennis Dawson for an address to Her Majesty the Queen in reply to her speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, sometimes sitting here as a member of parliament can be a depressing and frustrating experience. Sometimes I get fed up hearing the complaints of the greedy minority and the demands of those who feel they are not getting their fair share. It is a broken record. I am tired of hearing about the excluded group from the Atlantic provinces, the unheard voice of the west, Quebec aspirations, native peoples' search, amendments to the Official Languages Act, equity of status of the Official Languages Act and policies for official language minorities. These are not the real, deep and genuine concerns of Canadians today.

It is time to start talking not only about these issues but also about the will of the majority of Canadians—Canadians who are fed up because the current government of Canada has over-spent, over-taxed, interfered, over-regulated our lives, debased our currency and all but bankrupted our nation. Perhaps they are angry also because industry is grinding along in bottom gear, with falling profits, which means that more men and women are unemployed in Canada today than at almost any other time in our history. Canadians are tired of being bought with their own tax dollars. Canadians today want only one handout—the government's hand out of their pockets.

What does taxation at a rate of 43 per cent of the gross national product really mean to Canadians? It means the average Canadian—and that is the Canadian you and I represent here today—earning \$15,000 per year will pay \$7,000 of it to the government in a multitude of hidden and not so hidden taxes. It means the average Canadian who starts work at nine o'clock in the morning will work until 1.30 in the afternoon each and every day of the year before he earns any money that he can call his own. It means the government has increased its spending by 377 per cent since this Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) took over the government of Canada.

During the same period wages increased by only 89 per cent. I ask you, my constituents and the people of Canada, during this tremendous increase of taxes by 377 per cent, have the services the government has provided improved by 377 per cent—300 per cent—200 per cent—100 per cent—zero, or have the services seemed to diminish? I leave that question to you but I know that in the minds of my constituents it is clear that the government of Canada has taxed and taxed and that services have decreased and decreased.

When the Prime Minister became leader of the government, the over-all expenditure, including servicing the debt, was \$10.9 billion. By its own estimate the government intends to spend \$41.1 billion of the taxpayers' money this year and it

[*Mr. Speaker.*]

has already over-spent by many billions. The government's budgetary deficit for 1976-77 totals \$6.3 billion, an absurd growth rate of more than 50 per cent from the previous year. This completely unwarranted deficit is almost as much as the government spent in total during its first year in office. The total direct debt of the government amounts to \$12,500 for each of the 9.6 million persons employed in the economy or \$5,217 for each of the 23 million people living in Canada. The cost of servicing this debt amounted to \$7.9 billion during the past year alone and represents \$822.92 per person employed or \$343 per capita. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the average Canadian with a family of four does not want to carry \$20,000 of debt at a cost to his family of \$1,372 a year in interest charges. Given the choice, any family man in Canada would not have incurred this debt on behalf of himself or saddled his unborn children and grandchildren with such a long term burden.

• (1222)

Instead of promises, this government should outline some new policies, policies which will restore our personal freedom, promote economic welfare and achieve a greater degree of social justice. The Prime Minister, when talking to a group of unemployed in London, Ontario, stated: "Our costs are too high and we are taking it too easy; Canadians have to get that message". He and his government should take his own advice. Continually the Prime Minister talks of the unrealistic expectations of Canadians. In his remarks yesterday the Prime Minister commented, as reported at page 40 of *Hansard*:

I confess I am somewhat mystified by the fact that in the past few years Canadians seem to have lost a sense of perspective about the country.

In truth, it is not Canadians who have lost their perspective about their country; it is the Prime Minister who has lost his sense of the achievements of which this country is capable. The Prime Minister of this country will have to carry the burden of destroying Canada's vision of itself.

This year's favourite phrase in Canada seems to be that Canada is "an economic mess". Even the finance minister has said frankly that there will be another large gap between the number of jobs which open up in the country and the number of people entering the work force this year and in the near future.

What policies—not promises—have been brought forward to inject some life into the economy? The fledgling finance minister likes to say that our 90 cent dollar will stimulate the economy. To date that economic respite has not occurred. What the finance minister so blithely ignores is what the experience of Britain and other countries whose currencies have been depreciating has shown—that a falling exchange rate tends to start a self-perpetuating slide. A falling exchange rate speeds up the cost-push cycle and erodes whatever benefits are associated with the deflated dollar.

In British Columbia people I talk to are amazed and angered that the federal government cannot seem to perceive clearly the economic and social conditions of the nation's regions. They shake their heads in disgust when they hear of