

essence of what we are trying to achieve as a government, but much broader than that, as a people.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, all of us who have been in politics a while have learned to have modest expectations about throne speeches. Throne speeches are almost inevitably vague. They usually lack focus because they cover such a wide range of subjects.

In judging any throne speech, you start with modest expectations and you look for those fresh and creative ideas, those bright and sensitive responses to our many problems that make a good speech stand out from a disappointment.

I have to say, despite the efforts of the previous minister to dress up this speech, there were no fresh and creative ideas in this throne speech. There were no sensitive responses to the hundreds of thousands of people across this country who are hurting because of the government's policies, policies which have been in effect and policies which will continue to be in effect, as expressed by this throne speech.

This speech was not just uninspiring, it was full of bland ideas recycled from the past. As a banner to unite this country the speech is a disaster. As a hope for our economy and the people in our economy, it really is a shameful disappointment to Canadians. If we look around at the reality of our economy, it is a reality which is grim and tough for many, many people.

• (1150)

I have here the report of Statistics Canada which came out last week, May 10, 1991. It shows that over the past year in our country, we have lost 418,000 full-time jobs. The government talks bravely about creating 2.5 million new jobs by the year 2000. It does not recognize at all, in what was said in the speech, that it has devastated this country with these kinds of figures: 418,000 full-time jobs lost in just a year. That kind of devastation is something that a country cannot take. With that number of full time jobs eliminated, one cannot expect people in this country to keep faith in their government and in their political system.

The Address

That is why across this country, and I have been travelling across it, one hears so much in the way of cynicism and despair about our government, about our political system.

It is not because people have come to distrust politicians in general, as this government would have us believe. It is because this government has lost the trust and the faith of Canadians across this country in policy area after policy area, whether we talk about the environment and the fact that the much heralded green plan was actually cut back in the last budget, or we talk about social services, so crucial to many people in this country in the middle of a recession. This government has lost the faith of people because it has refused to pay its previously agreed share of the Canada Assistance Plan benefits going to British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario.

Then this government has the nerve to say to a government like that in Ontario, when it keeps faith with the promises to give people health: "Terrible, you are spending more money". The reason more money is being spent is because the people across this aisle, the people who now come to us and ask for a non-partisan attitude, have destroyed the sense of trust that people in this country can have in their federal government. It has broken not just election promises made before an election but signed agreements with the provinces on which people throughout this country counted and as a result of which they are now suffering.

I say "suffering" not to exaggerate, but because it is an honest reflection of what we have heard in communities across this country. Our economic recovery tour has crossed Canada, has visited community after community, has heard from poverty groups, has heard from community development groups and has heard from city social services groups. It has heard of the way in which the unemployment changes that this government put into effect have forced people on to welfare, have forced municipalities to pay for that welfare, often devastating the tax base of those municipalities and destroying the dignity of the people who are forced to experience such welfare, very often for the first time in their lives.

We can talk about bankruptcies. Again we can look at the latest figures which have come out for March of this year. They show a record. This government has not given