

having seen me in their constituencies, that I am not exactly delighted they are here, and that I tried to stop their coming; but I welcome the contributions they made and wish to congratulate them.

I noted that when the hon. member for Malpeque was speaking, he referred to regional development problems particularly as they concern Prince Edward Island. If I might move from one island in that region to another, I would simply draw the attention of the House of Commons to a rare instance of consistency in policy on the part of the government of Canada as applied to the island of Cape Breton. I think that whenever we can find evidence of consistent policy from this Liberal government, it is well worth noting.

I remember, as I am sure most Canadians do, that some 25 years ago a predecessor of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien), Hon. Walter Gordon, proposed, as a solution to the employment problems of Cape Breton, that the people of that island should simply get up and leave. Now, in that tradition, the minister has allowed the people of Cape Breton a passport office.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: There are one or two matters to which I intend to refer briefly during my opening remarks in this debate. Colleagues of mine will be referring at greater length to other aspects of the Speech from the Throne. I want to make a brief, passing reference in the throne speech to a goal in the field of energy which my colleagues and I believe to be an absolutely inadequate one for Canada; that is, the repetition in the Speech from the Throne of Canada's goal of being simply a policy of self-reliance in the field of energy. In reality, that goal of self-reliance, as defined and pursued by the government, means increased dependence on foreigners for critical supplies of oil. We in this party believe that Canada, with more oil resources than Saudi Arabia, must work toward a policy of self-sufficiency for Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: This means no net imports of oil or of any other major fuel. I say to the House and to the Canadian people that in the absence of a clear objective of self-sufficiency, Canada will be in very uncertain hands within a decade in regard to its energy supplies.

I want also to deal very quickly with one suggestion made in the Speech from the Throne which is a matter of particular interest to my distinguished colleague from Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). I refer to the government's professed desire to secure parliament's reaction to the green paper on freedom of information. I say to the government very directly: Don't waste our time with that document. That is not a freedom of information paper; it is a rationale for denying access by Canadians to information which is rightfully their property.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Address—Mr. Clark

Mr. Clark: Canadians require much more than pious declarations of openness from the government. They need an end to secrecy, cover-up and lawbreaking by their own government. They need to know where the pay-offs went in the AECL deals. We believe this is something the government could find out if it really wanted to know. We need an independent public inquiry into the uranium cartel, not just a secret inquiry during which one official investigates other officials, without any guarantee that we in parliament or the people of Canada will ever learn the results. We need, also, an end to the secret agreement made by the Department of National Revenue to give the police in Canada open access to the tax files of individual Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: We all want more effective action taken against organized crime in Canada. We on this side have been pressing the Solicitor General (Mr. Fox) to allocate more resources for this purpose. The Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Guay) has a fundamental duty to the taxpayers of Canada to protect the privacy of tax files, otherwise we risk very serious abuse of this information. We know from the experience in the United States, unhappily, just where this kind of abuse can lead a free society.

Even though it is part of the parliamentary ritual to extend congratulations to the mover and seconder of the address, it was an exercise in which I enjoyed engaging. But another ritual has developed in recent years which is not so welcome. I wish to observe what has become standard practice under the present government and to take notice of the changes in the ministry since we last met. It is difficult to single out one or two ministers for outstanding incompetence—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: I think the only difference between the Minister of National Revenue and the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) is that the Minister of National Revenue proved his utter unsuitability to hold any responsible office before he was appointed, while the Minister of Supply and Services has had the opportunity to demonstrate his incompetence in several portfolios.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: That minister has disgraced himself and his government so often that it remains an intriguing question why the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) keeps him in the cabinet. Yesterday, the Prime Minister celebrated a birthday upon which all members were pleased to congratulate him. We are not exactly sure of the mark, in years, the Prime Minister has passed, but we do know that in terms of cabinet changes under his administration he has now nearly reached the 150 mark. Indeed, the only thing that is constant about the Prime Minister is that he keeps changing his ministers. I would remind the House that during his administration we have had eight ministers of communications, nine ministers of consumer and corpo-