

*The Address—Mr. Broadbent*

if you discount the difference in labour costs between Canada and Japan, the Canadian automotive industry is just as efficient as the industry in Japan.

I want to say something that is very important to both the Leader of the Opposition and all Canadians. If we are going to enter into a competitive game with all the other nations of the world, especially the Third World on labour costs, they should say that. If they want Canadian workers to be paid \$1 an hour, the Conservative Party should say that. If they want to go back to the 1920s in terms of our standard of living, they have an obligation to be frank and say that to the people of Canada. My Party will have nothing to do with that. There are different ways of approaching, understanding and being up to date on the question of productivity.

I want to say something about medicare. The Prime Minister spoke with the same great passion which the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) demonstrates in her defence of medicare. He left the impression that the Liberals sort of led the country, that they brought this to Canada. I remind the Prime Minister of what happened in the sixties. The Liberal Party in the Province of Saskatchewan and a man named Thatcher joined with the Conservative Party in that province in doing all they could to stop medicare from coming to Canada.

The Prime Minister enjoys his debating time with the Tories because the Tories can make him look progressive. He said he did not want there to be any sick people around, that if the Tories formed the Government they had better watch out. It was too bad that he did not go to Saskatchewan in the sixties to tell the Liberal Party there that it had better change its position because the sick in Saskatchewan need medicare. He would have been fighting a progressive battle. The Prime Minister said "touché". He said off the record that he was on the right side in the sixties. It just took his Party a little time to catch up.

We heard the views of the Leader of the Opposition on the need to provide more funding. My Party believes that the federal Government has an obligation to change and reopen the funding arrangements between the federal Government and the provinces with regard to medicare and post-secondary education. We say that candidly.

There is something else I want to say candidly. Politicians should say these things from time to time. If it means an increase in taxes at the federal level and Canadians have to pay a little more to ensure the restoration of a universal medicare system, adequately funded, this Party will support that increase in taxation if it is necessary to preserve the system. I am sure the majority of Canadians will support that.

I do not share the view of a former Prime Minister, Mr. Pearson. He said that an Opposition Party in a parliamentary system does not have an obligation to present a program. I am not defending Mr. Pearson. I flatly disagree with what he said at that time. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that, particularly in these times that are perilous in the international domain as well as extremely difficult domestically, an opposi-

tion party in Canada, like the Government in Canada, has an obligation to stand clearly on the issues of the day.

The Leader of the Opposition tells the people of Canada that he is prepared to ensure funding of sufficient degree for the provinces to pay for medicare. We agree with him. In fact, we are saying that. I wish the Government would say that. I wish the Minister of National Health and Welfare would be honest and admit that the money, which they pretend in the Speech from the Throne was some largesse from the federal Government, would in fact go automatically, regardless of whether there was a Speech from the Throne. At the end of my speech in the House, I would like the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and say that, once we get the money to Alberta and in particular the poorer provinces of Canada, he, as a would-be Prime Minister, would ensure that there would be no extra billing and no user fees anywhere in this land.

● (1520)

*[Translation]*

I also want to discuss Bill S-31. The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) said in his speech this afternoon that, as Leader of the Official Opposition, he was against Bill S-31. I am very happy to hear that; it is wonderful. Unfortunately, we, the NDP Members, took this position in the House of Commons before the Progressive Conservatives. At the same time, I would like to emphasize something which is rather important. As I recall, the Leader of the Official Opposition stated outside the House that he agrees with the principle of Bill S-31. However, he is not satisfied with this Bill because it was introduced by the Liberal Government. That is very funny! Perhaps he is suggesting that if the Government were Progressive Conservative and he himself were Prime Minister, he would like to introduce something like Bill S-31. However, in such a case, we would have a Progressive Conservative instead of Liberal Bill. As for us, in my Party, I repeat that we are against the principle of this Bill. We are against such a Bill, whether it is Liberal or Progressive Conservative. Whatever the case may be, we are against it.

Once again, I would like to hear the Leader of the Official Opposition explain the difference between the principle of Bill S-31 and that of Bill S-31 as introduced by the Liberals.

*[English]*

That is all I would like to say at this point, Mr. Speaker, on the position of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Conservative Party. I do want to turn now to the subject matter which is before the House, and that is the Speech from the Throne.

It is accepted as a truism in most democracies, I think, that to achieve political goals it is essential to focus appeal simply on the immediate interests of the people. I would say that this is a truism that holds only when the goals are very ordinary indeed. However, the stated objectives of the Speech from the Throne, if one reads them with care, are not ordinary goals. They are not at all simply the routine objectives of political discussion and debate.