

ment should give up its responsibilities for managing the national economy in favour of a consensus resulting from a conference. I suggest that the federal government should commit itself to follow up on the recommendations of the conference or, on the contrary, to reject them in a rational way. Only such a mechanism would ensure that Canadians have a say in their own economy, the only way they will be protected against sudden and dramatic turnabouts in economic policy.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the essence of this philosophy is that the economy of Canada is too important to be left to the cabinet of Canada and a handful of its bureaucrats. There must be—

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Especially to this cabinet.

**Mr. Clark:** This or any other cabinet, but this cabinet is particularly dangerous because we can see what they do.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** We are speaking here of a process, and there clearly must be, in a democratic country where the private sector is so much more important to our growth than the government sector, a process that will allow everyone affected by major economic decisions to have some influence upon those decisions, and a process that will allow the government to escape from the prison of its own advice and its own advisers and consider the good advice and the good sense of people who want something more in this country than to get the economy going.

We face a serious crisis today. We face it for two reasons. The first is that we have a government that fundamentally does not care about economics. It was elected with a mandate to unify and it will be judged at other times on its capacity to unify this country, a capacity which, as I say, has become more clear in recent months in the province of Quebec and in recent years in western Canada and in other regions.

The other reason that we have a crisis today is that the government has consistently been freezing out other opinion—and that must change. The consequences, sir, are all around us. We have crisis today. We have, as I have indicated, time bombs built in for tomorrow. The budget is ahead. There is still, I would presume, some time to affect it. We have asked during the last two days that there will be a clear commitment to generating jobs as a major priority of this government. No commitment was given. The only instrument we have, as representatives of the people of Canada—representatives of the unemployed in Canada who obviously have no spokesmen on the government side—is to dramatize this crisis to a government which asks, in effect, “What’s a million unemployed?”, when bringing this matter forward in debate as we have done today.

The Minister of Finance will be replying. I hope he will give some indication of the general direction in which he intends to go. I hope he will give us some commitment that there will be in his budget a priority determination to create jobs for those

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Canadians who are out of work now, and I hope that he will give us some commitment that the budget will begin a process of much more open decision making. I express to him in advance my apology that I will have to read most of his remarks in *Hansard*—

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Clark:** You had to sit through mine, and I do apologize for this. But I will read them with the avidity that I do all his remarks, and I hope the minister will in his remarks today and in the budget that he brings in reverse a record that he and his colleagues have set—a record of contempt for the unemployed in Canada, of blindness to the need for economic confidence and growth in Canada, and failure to exercise its fundamental responsibility for national leadership. Clearly, if that is not done, this motion must express a majority view of the House of Commons as to the failure of this government to carry out its responsibilities to bring economic leadership to the country.

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are in serious trouble. Outside this House we have the most serious unemployment rate of any period since the depression, and inside the House—as has been demonstrated day after day since last September—we have a government which neither cares nor knows what to do about the problem. Just as in the depression, instead of advancing creative or innovative thoughts, the government has produced a new rigidity respecting conservative economics. So, too, today do we have a government which watches month after month as unemployment figures increase and responds to that with the most absurd banalities one could imagine.

• (1610)

Just yesterday in the House of Commons the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said that the cause—not the only cause, but one of the principal causes—of our situation is that Canadians are living beyond their means. I thought I was listening to R. B. Bennett all over again. The statement made by the Prime Minister was both incredible and sad. It was incredible because the Prime Minister ought to know better, and I think he does know better. It was sad because the statement he made betrayed an insensitivity—which is almost beyond belief—about the more than one million Canadians who are out of work. Certain people are living beyond their means, and I suggest that the Prime Minister is pre-eminently among them. Canada’s poor and unemployed are certainly not living beyond their means.

This government displays lack of thought, lack of action and no caring at all. Instead, we hear commonplace utterances of the most conservative economic banalities one could dig up, and I say that with all seriousness. Instead of the present crisis leading to the imaginative application of new ideas, and instead of the implementation of progressive ideas which are not necessarily new, we have inaction by this government. In my view, this government’s response to the unemployment crisis can only be described as traumatically regressive. It is