

*Supply*

for the benefit of people outside the country, why Canada is such a good place to live.

There is no doubt we compare favourably with the country that considers itself the richest in the world, in material terms, and I am of course referring to the United States. Does it have an old age security pension like the one in Canada? No. Do they have the kind of health insurance plan we have in Canada? No, of course not. We have other programs as well which provide a better balance in our society. In other words, our philosophy here in Canada—the culmination of many years of hard work—is that we are our brother's keeper.

If my neighbours are well off, the chances are that I, as a member of the same community, will be as well. But if my neighbours are not doing well, chances are that I won't be doing well either. For all practical purposes, we are in the same boat. When we think about it very few countries in the world have evolved this way. It is only fair to say that over the years these policies and programs were put in place by the former CCF, now the NDP, and by the Liberal Party of Canada. After all, the truth has its place in debate, and history as well.

If we look at the history of this country and how we evolved, and if we look at everything we have tried to put in place to protect both individual and collective freedoms, and if we compare our system of post-secondary education with the systems in most countries, it is relatively inexpensive. A lot more could be said, but in any case we know we enjoy tremendous advantages.

What worries me is that what we have achieved over the years is not carved in stone. We cannot assume our social benefits are here to stay, come what may. If we look at what has happened in the past fifteen or twenty years, and if we look strictly at the facts, we see a tax system, something that is fundamental to a democracy, that is completely unbalanced, unfair and inequitable. Very little has been done to improve the system, despite the fact that 25 years ago we were fortunate enough to have a royal commission, the Carter commission.

Recently there was a two-hour radio broadcast recapitulating the events that led up to this proposed tax reform which, in the end, was never implemented.

Let us take a look at recent developments, especially since the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. One does not have to be a professor of economics to realize that

the FTA has seriously undermined our industrial production. We have become extremely vulnerable as a result of this agreement, and problems keep surfacing, week after week. It is one of the factors that undermines our ability to maintain a society that can afford these major programs.

What about our tax system and the number of tax increases we have had during the past five or six years? I am not saying the government is entirely responsible, but for the past five or six years they were responsible for running this country. They put an additional burden on Canada's middle class, where taxes—we have almost reached the point of a tax revolt—are the topic of the day. But all this falls on deaf ears.

We cannot go on like this. Ask Canadians whether they think an election should be called. I think it is pretty obvious the opposition House leader's motion clearly reflects the wishes of all Canadians who want to get rid of a nightmare they have been living with for the past few years. As far as free trade is concerned, the financial elite and our big transnational and multinational corporations have only one allegiance: the profit principle. That Canadians think an election is needed to clear the air should come as no surprise. We cannot expect a government that introduced free trade to do anything about it. It will take a new vision to negotiate in our best interests and to renegotiate the aspects that are disastrous to our country.

We cannot maintain an agreement that is diminishing us as a nation, destroying our industrial base and indirectly destroying our social programs. Without the industrial base, the industrial infrastructure to provide revenue and wealth, how can we maintain this social contract to protect each other? We will not be able to, and we realize that.

We have tremendous skills in this country. We have ideas. The past holds the key to the future. We can meet this challenge, but not if we let ourselves be diminished by an agreement which so far has been disastrous. Ontario has suffered the worst, but although it may not look that way, the impact will be just as bad on Quebec. As part of this agreement, our neighbours to the south wanted us to get rid of our supply management program. A system that has been invaluable to Canadian agriculture is now being challenged, and this we cannot afford.