

The Address—Mr. McCauley

operations. The task force members seem to want to have their cake and eat it too, arguing on the one hand that management will be free to make decisions motivated solely by profit, while on the other hand burdening this "profit making" company with potential losses.

And what about the actual process of privatization? If the government decides to "BCRIC" Petro-Canada, perhaps we should look at the share distribution of BCRIC itself. In that process, two million of the 12 million shares offered free to B.C. residents went unclaimed. Is it not likely that the same thing will happen with Petro-Canada if it is "BCRIC'd"? Is it not likely that many people, unaware of the method of claiming their shares, not used to this kind of offering or knowing little or nothing about the stock market, will lose out on their shares in Petro-Canada? What will the government do for them?

In the end only one conclusion is possible: this government committed itself to a policy that seemed good when it was involved in an election campaign. People thought they could get some votes with it. Now this government is pointlessly sticking to a silly policy, a policy which makes no sense and which is, in a word, stupid. If the government were really serious about listening to Canadians, it would leave Petro-Canada alone.

If the government were really serious about listening to people, if the government really cared about people, it would not be systematically throwing them out of work as it is doing in my riding of Moncton. In the past two weeks, Mr. Speaker, 35 to 50 of my constituents have been laid off from the Department of Transport in Moncton. I am told this is only the thin edge of the wedge, that this 2 per cent cutback will be increased to a 10 per cent cutback in the very near future. In other words, this is just the beginning. The jobs being eliminated are not statistics, not figures on a balance sheet designed to make the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Stevens) look good, or to justify his nickname of "the Slasher." The lost jobs represent people, fathers and mothers, whose sense of self-worth that comes from gainful employment has been callously pulled out from underneath them. What will they say to their children when Christmas comes?

If the government really cared about people, little people, ordinary Canadians, would it be flirting with the Premier of Alberta, professing undying love in the form of increasing prices for oil by at least \$4 a barrel next year? Such an increase will add at least 12 cents to the price of a gallon of gasoline or heating oil and will strike hardest and most directly at the consumers in Atlantic Canada. These are consumers, Mr. Speaker who have no choice but to drive their own cars. We do not have access to systems of mass transportation in Petitcodiac and Salisbury, New Brunswick. Atlantic Canadian consumers have no choice but to heat their homes with oil because cheaper natural gas is not available. Does the government care? I think not.

I think of one of my constituents in Moncton who, after five years with the Department of Transport, is now out of a job, kicked out because of the policies of this government. Without

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a job he will have to pay more money for gas and oil in the coming year. Will he think the government cares? I think not.

Besides its lack of care and concern for ordinary Canadians, I question this government's care and concern for Canada. If this government is intent on opening up the process of government to Canadians, should it not also be opening up Canada itself to Canadians?

The Prime Minister has a different vision of Canada. He is fond of using the phrase "community of communities". It is a nice phrase, Mr. Speaker, a catchy phrase, a comforting phrase, and I am sure on the Prime Minister's part, a sincere phrase. I do not question the Prime Minister's sincerity. I just question his wisdom. What does the phrase mean in practice? How is "community of communities" translated into action? It seems to focus more on small "c" communities than on the big "C" community of Canada. The Prime Minister seems to think that by making the provinces stronger he will, in some strange mysterious way, make Canada greater. Curious logic, Mr. Speaker.

It is somewhat like the father of a large family giving all his children \$50,000 each, setting them up in competing businesses, and then expecting that situation to strengthen the family somehow. It does not make much sense.

The Prime Minister is telling us that the old days of federal-provincial tensions are over, that confrontation is to be replaced by conciliation, that demands and commands are to be replaced by jovial consensus. His government will consult with the provinces. He will talk to the premiers; he will have dialogue with the provinces. This is another example, Mr. Speaker, of noble sentiments not matched by deeds. Isn't it curious that this man who promises to do all these things with the provinces has nothing to say to the province of Quebec at this crucial time in its history? His philosophy with regard to Quebec, Mr. Speaker, seems to be benign neglect—perhaps if we just pretend that it is not there, it will quietly go away. I wonder what the people of Quebec think about their federal government on that issue.

The Prime Minister's theory of federal-provincial relations will not heal the regional sickness that afflicts us. It will only make it worse, because the Prime Minister is ignoring a fundamental fact of this country, that federal-provincial antagonisms are not political, not Liberals versus Conservatives, or Social Credit versus Conservatives, or NDP versus Liberals, or whatever. Federal-provincial antagonisms stem from the basic fact that there are conflicting interests in any federal-provincial system. There are two ways to deal with that kind of conflict, that kind of basic institutionalized conflict. One way is to appeal to idealism, the spirit of loyalty to one's country. It is to present the big picture, the forest instead of all the little trees.

The other way is to appeal to some baser instincts, the spirit of selfishness, the instinct of "me first, you last", greed when it comes to sharing the natural resources that mother nature has arbitrarily assigned to some parts of this country and not to others.