

House, with the possible exception of the constitutional question, provides a dim glimmer of light into the future showing where this government is taking this country. It is an omen not only in what it says but also in what it fails to tell the Canadian people.

In introducing this budget the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) reminded us, and I quote:

Only ten years ago, the world was riding high on the long wave of postwar economic expansion... While inflation was beginning to creep up in many industrial countries, we all felt confident in our collective abilities to manage growth as the world economies expanded in concert.

It was in this atmosphere of optimism that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made his commitment to build a "Just Society" for Canada. To reinforce this commitment the current Minister of Communications (Mr. Fox) reiterated his fundamental belief in people oriented government, on February 26, 1973. He said:

'Policies for people' is a motto to which I wholeheartedly subscribe. It is a motto which ensures our responsiveness to the aspirations of the Canadian people—

The desire to build a more just and equitable Canadian society is, I am sure, an aspiration shared by every member of this House. But a commitment can either be real and sincere, or deceptive and fraudulent. The ultimate measure of our commitments depends on the actions or policies we adopt and the results achieved. In spite of all the rhetoric, the net effect of Liberal policy in the 1970s has been systematically to undermine Canada's prospects for the future. In 1970 the rate of inflation in Canada was 3.3 per cent, and today, after years of "wrestling inflation to the ground," prices are increasing at a rate of 10.7 per cent.

In 1970 we enjoyed a \$1.1 billion surplus in our balance of payments. Today, after ten years of gross mismanagement of the economy, our balance of payments position has deteriorated to an unprecedented \$6 billion deficit.

At the beginning of the last decade the Canadian dollar traded at par with the U.S. dollar. Today it is worth 85 cents U.S., and by the end of this decade, if the budget is any indication of where this government is taking Canada, we will be lucky if it is worth 60 cents U.S.

In 1969 the share of national income going to the 20 per cent of Canadians with the lowest incomes stood at only 4.3 per cent. By 1978, the last year for which data is available, this government's policies had managed to cut their share back even further, to 4.1 per cent.

In 1969 the unemployment rate in Canada was only 4.4 per cent. The legacy of Liberal economic policies in the 1970s is that today we have more people out of work in Canada than were unemployed during the Great Depression. The unemployment rate is nearly 8 per cent. In reality the unemployment rate is certainly in excess of 8 per cent, with one million Canadians unemployed.

In the early 1970s our gross national product in constant dollars was growing at respectable rates, around 6 per cent and 7 per cent. By the end of the decade this had been cut back sharply, and according to the Minister of Finance's own

budget statement the other night, we will experience an absolute decline in real output this year.

This budget has the dubious distinction of heralding that Liberal tradition into the 1980s. It represents a renewed commitment to the politics of opportunism, the politics of resource dependency, the politics of social injustice, and the politics of wilful deceit, all at the expense of the Canadian public.

There currently is a real controversy over the proper role of government in our society. Should we have more government or less government? I venture to say that one thing is clear, and that is that the Canadian people would definitely be better off without this government.

However, the controversy follows from the failure of government to provide the leadership this country presently so desperately needs. There is a sense of despair and uncertainty across Canada. There is no clear consensus on what we as a people are trying to achieve. There are no plans. There are no goals. I suggest that people across Canada from the Atlantic provinces to the north, throughout central Canada and into the west, are puzzled today. They are confused today, and the voices we have heard referred to as the voices of western separatism are simply reflections of that.

I for one do not for a moment believe that westerners are prepared to separate from this fine country, but they are upset. Western Canadians, like Canadians everywhere, are concerned that there is no direction for this country and no indication of the goals and aspirations of this government. Their feelings of frustration are vented through this avenue of separatism.

To some extent this despair and uncertainty we find across Canada are reflected in the constitutional debate, but nowhere is this better illustrated than in this budget. Here, in the first budget of the 1980s, there is no statement of clearly defined national objectives. We have no idea where this government thinks our country should be in 1985, let alone in 1990. There are no visions, no goals, no objectives, and no direction. Who would begin to develop a family without any idea of where it is going in the future? What businessman would consider operating a business with no objective, no clearly stated goal, and no vision? To my mind it is this lack of vision and direction which is causing the despair and concern in Canadians everywhere.

Is this government concerned about social justice? Then what should the distribution of income look like in 1985 and 1990? Is this government concerned about our mushrooming balance of trade deficit in manufactured goods? Then what should our balance of trade in end products be in 1985 and 1990? What percentage of the domestic market should be supplied by domestic production by 1985 and 1990? Is the government concerned about the level of unemployment in Canada? Then what is our target unemployment rate for 1985? This government has coerced Canadians into accepting unemployment rates of 7 per cent and 8 per cent. In a country as rich as Canada, with the possibilities which exist here, to accept rates of 7 per cent and 8 per cent is a disgrace. Many western industrialized nations would not consider these rates