

The Address—Mr. Thacker

interest on the debt. This money is being paid to people who already have wealth. The point is, Mr. Speaker, that if you had \$1 million, there is no way you would invest it in a plant or business in this country, because you could sit back, lend it to the Government and receive an absolutely guaranteed rate of return with no risk. The rich are becoming fabulously rich.

When looking at the history of Third World countries, we find that often they went through the same process. All of the wealth was being concentrated into very few hands. There was a small group of people with immense wealth and a huge lower class with no wealth at all. That is what is happening in this country, and we must stop that.

I am always struck by the irony of comparing the New Democratic Party with the Progressive Conservative Party. I suspect that proportionately, more people of wealth belong to the PC Party than the NDP. Yet it is members of the PC Party who are saying that this concentration of wealth is wrong. They are saying that we must stop that deficit so that the rich, many of whom are members of the PC Party, cannot continue to become filthy rich. However, members of the NDP who claim to stand up for the poor, the old and disadvantaged are arguing for a larger deficit and do not seem to make the connection that that deficit hurts their people far more, particularly in the longrun, than does facing reality. I have always been struck by that irony.

We tried an experiment 200 years ago. Prior to that, we were all ruled by kings and decisions were made by a small bureaucracy. People were serfs on the land. We then tried a wonderful experiment of letting people own property individually. We let them work hard on their own land so that they could be better off and so that their children could be better off. In that 200 years, we in the western world have created a wealth that is unprecedented. Even the poor in our society today are better off than the kings, queens and monarchs were 250 years ago. Yet we have had an intrusion on that right to property and an intrusion on the right of a person to create a business and do well. Who is leading that challenge against the right to property? It is members of the NDP. When we wanted to have entrenched in the Constitution the right to individual ownership of property, they fought it. The Grits had accepted that amendment on a Friday—

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): The provincial Premiers fought, and they were all Tories. Come on now. Stick to the facts.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, we cannot get around the fact that members of the Conservative Party proposed an amendment to the Constitution which Members of the Liberal Party accepted on a Friday. The Leader of the NDP (Mr. Broadbent) rose on Saturday and said that if we wanted his support on the Constitution, we should take out the right to property. Liberal Members returned on Monday and took out the amendment entrenching the right to property—

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Property rights are provincial.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the Hon. Member's time has expired. Questions and comments?

● (1230)

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member earlier made the claim that the NDP is arguing for larger deficits. We are arguing that the burden should be fairly shared. The economic statement of the Government continues to put the financial burden on moderate and low-income people. If the Hon. Member wants very wealthy Canadians to share in the burden, when is his Government going to take concrete steps and bring in, for example, a minimum income tax, which his Leader indicated during the campaign the Party was interested in doing.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague opposite that there will be a more fair tax system. As he well knows, the so-called progressive income tax system captures less than 50 per cent of the tax revenues. In actual fact, over 50 per cent of the revenues which flow into the Consolidated Revenue Fund are from sales taxes and direct taxes on people, which is highly regressive and detrimental to the disadvantaged in Canada. Within the progressive income tax system itself, the deductions and exemptions accrue to the benefit of people with vast amounts of wealth, rather than those of moderate incomes. With respect to on this review, I am hoping that the Hon. Member will stand and say that we have to move, for example, in the area of family allowance. People receive direct family allowances, but the income tax system brings back less than 50 per cent of that expenditure, even for the highest wage earners. Perhaps something should be done in that area. If we look at the tax deduction under the Income Tax Act, people who are wealthy receive a reduction of \$710, however, poor people cannot receive a deduction because they do not have taxable incomes. Surely we can move in that area. Why can we not have members of the NDP suggesting some of those things? I always hear them arguing against cuts, even the cuts proposed by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret). The NDP is fighting those individual cuts, but we have to start somewhere. I believe that in the document entitled: "A New Direction for Canada", the proper questions have been asked. I would like members of the NDP to respond to that document.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I am provoked into making a small comment, because it happened, as this debate was taking place, that I was reading a background paper from the National Anti-Poverty Organization, which deals with many of the questions the Hon. Member has just raised. If the Hon. Member truly believes that doing away with universality is going to help the poor people in this country, he must deal with the fact that an organization such as NAPO, which represents those people, says that it would, in fact, hurt poor people more. Why is it that a group which stands up for poor people seems to take a contrary view to that of the Hon. Member?

Second, I believe a comment is required on the point raised with respect to the deficit. I think one has to ask the Hon. Member, where does he get the statistics that indicate it is the rich people in Canada who are benefiting from the deficit? As he well knows, the great bulk of the Canadian deficit is