

*Economic Conditions*

examine his statement in some perspective in view of our relations with the rest of the world.

He is not the first Liberal Minister of Finance—although he may be the last for a while—but we have to view his disclaimer of responsibility in the light of his predecessors. The ones I have personally known as a journalist in this House and as a politician include Mitchell Sharp, Walter Gordon, Edgar Benson and John Turner. I wonder what they think, reflecting on the economic crisis they faced. I wonder what they think of a colleague who stands before the House of Commons as Minister of Finance and disclaims all responsibility for his actions, who blames everybody else but himself, and who tells the whole world that under his stewardship the Canadian economy is a runaway economy, out of control and beyond his grasp.

But then that is in the tradition of the Liberal party, these pseudo-nationalists. They go to Britain to amend the constitution and to Washington for their monetary and fiscal policies. They have already gone to Saudi Arabia for their oil.

● (1100)

We have had finance ministers who have assumed this responsibility to control and run the economy. The hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) and the Clark administration brought in a budget which said clearly that we could control our own destiny. Today on my desk there is a letter from a constituent dealing, as it happens, with the constitution. I want to quote from it because I think the writer is voicing the feeling of many Canadians. She says:

I can't help feeling that we really are continuing to act as "colonials" by asking the British government to make everything neat and tidy for us... as a member of your constituency, I am asking you to act as my voice, and undoubtedly the voice of many more silent constituents... Please argue on our behalf for this right: to deal with our own problems.

This government is denying us the right to deal with our own problems. They are eroding the entire economic base which we need in order to live constructive, economic lives as social human beings. On behalf of all Canadians and all our constituents, we demand this right to deal with our own problems and we demand that the government deal with our economic problems today, not refer them to Britain or go to Washington.

There are certain steps the finance minister can take. First, he can acknowledge his responsibility to act, as his predecessors have done. He can also acknowledge that most of the economic policies and problems we face at present are routed in the economic policies of this government in the past. He can face up to the key economic facts of life. One is that the rate of inflation reflects the massive accumulation of federal deficits incurred by the Liberals over the past 12 years. Another is that interest rates are a reflection in part of the rate of inflation and the lack of investor confidence in the economy. Another economic fact he can face is that the outflow of money which is contributing to the pressure on the Canadian dollar is a direct result of his national energy policy which is forcing Canadian firms to move south, taking Canadian jobs with them. He can face up to the fact that his policies are wrecking the country, that the ship of state is on the rocks and sinking

fast. Only when he can see the problems can he and his government look for solutions. But he denies the problems and he will not look for solutions.

At the opening of my remarks I referred to the sense of failure which many Canadians feel today as a result of these Liberal policies. I want to remind Canadians that failure is a temporary state of affairs; that given the right economic policies we can free ourselves of this economic quagmire and use our energies, not in acrimonious debate, but in rebuilding our country together and planning for the bright future which was once our hope and is still our dream. We have to start somewhere and we demand, in this all night debate, that the Liberal government and the Minister of Finance start now.

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

**Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I realize that the suggestion I wish to make can be made only with unanimous consent, so I shall come to it immediately. It is realized that since we are on a motion to adjourn, there cannot be any other motion moved, but I hope the House will be unanimous in agreeing to the proposal that the House of Commons employees who have worked all night in the sitting which commenced on Thursday, December 18, 1980, and is still in progress be paid extra compensation for their service, and that the thanks of the House be extended to them.

**Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I think that motion meets with general acclaim on all sides of the House of Commons. I should like to join in the tribute which is intended by the motion put by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). There are pages who, dismissed earlier, nonetheless stayed on to assist. The translation people and *Hansard* reporters are staying on, so are the Table officers, the staff of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and, I might say, those of us who were here all through the night. Also, there are people here who do not appear in the chamber who have had something to do with maintaining the operation of this building, and there is the security staff and the protective service who have worked throughout the night. I assume, to the extent that it would apply to all services in the House, the proposal of the hon. member is intended to include all those people.

**Mr. Knowles:** Yes, all House of Commons employees who worked all night.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pinard:** When it comes to agreements, Mr. Speaker, I always agree.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Hon. members have heard the motion put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). Is it agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** It is so ordered.