

would think it would send a message—to the Conservatives that form is not enough. What is required is substance, commitment and action.

The Government can say over and over again that it stands for this type of motherhood or that type of apple pie, but when it comes down to presenting Bills in the House, when it comes down to voting on issues, when it comes down to putting teeth in the measures placed before us, that is another thing altogether. The credibility gap is growing, and growing each day.

I counted in the Speech from the Throne we have before us today some 57 promises, more or less commitments to do things. Some of them are very specific. For example, the construction of an ice-breaker for the North is very specific, although there is no timetable for construction and no amount of money is put forward. In any case, it is a specific promise and we will be watching it. However, we also have among those 57 promises some which are extremely vague. For example, I refer to page nine of the Speech where the Government says:

—in full co-operation with the provinces, my Government will seek to achieve high standards of excellence in education, technology development, and innovation.

Who could disagree with that? It is a goal we are all interested in. However, the Government says nothing about how it is going to do it. Is it going to introduce legislation, draw up budgets, or plan meetings for such and such a date? No, it simply makes that commitment. That, I submit to you, is part of the Government's image politics, it is rhetoric without substance.

● (1120)

We know what happened to the 338 promises made by the Conservatives in the 1984 election campaign. Most have been postponed or ignored. Very few of them have been implemented or passed by this House.

On page 2 of this hollow document, the Speech from the Throne, it says:

Two years ago, my government—

Meaning this Conservative Government.

—received a national mandate—a mandate for reform. It was a mandate that summoned Canada to the tasks of national reconciliation, economic renewal, social justice, and to a constructive internationalism. Today, my Ministers believe these goals are within reach.

That statement is so unbelievable it is almost laughable. Does the Conservative Government in fact believe that social justice is within reach? I will give further examples of the gap between what it says and what it does. It says that social justice is almost within reach, yet it cut back the moneys available for employment programs and training. The Government tried to deindex the Old Age Pension but finally backtracked because of the massive opposition in the country. In effect, the Government cut back on the indexation of family allowances. It also cut back on the rate of increases for

education and health care in the provinces through the EPF programs.

We are beginning to see the results of that all over the country. In my own city of Montreal hospital beds and radiology departments are being closed and people are not getting the medical care they need. At the universities and community colleges fees are being increased. Young people cannot go to university because it is becoming too expensive. All of this is happening under a Government which says that it was given a mandate to achieve social justice and that this is almost within reach.

The same Government cut back Katimavik, a very good program to help young people adapt to the modern world in which we live. This Government raised taxes for the middle and lower-income groups in the country while giving an exemption of \$500,000 for capital gains. The Government compensated bank creditors who had credits over \$60,000 when we had two bank failures.

The Government that did those things said in the Speech from the Throne that it has almost fulfilled the mandate it was given in 1984 to achieve social justice. That is so unbelievable it is almost laughable. As a matter of fact, as the Governor General was reading the Speech I wrote beside that comment in the Speech "Ho, ho, ho". That is the only reaction one can have to such a claim.

Another example of that type of rhetoric with regard to social justice is seen on page 12 of the Speech. The Governor General, on behalf of the Government, said:

My Government will continue to enlist the support of all in pursuit of the common goal: a modern, tolerant, and caring nation in which its citizens are secure and prosperous.

Now, isn't that a fine statement. Who would disagree with that fine statement? The same Government that said it wants a caring nation cuts unemployment insurance benefits for the thousands and thousands of people in the country who have severance pay or early retirement pensions and are still looking for work. They may be in their 50s and have children in university and college. The Government has slashed unemployment insurance benefits for them. As a matter of fact, members of the Conservative caucus stood up and said that they opposed this, but they refused to vote against those cuts on an opposition motion of the NDP.

The statements in this speech about a caring nation and the achievements of social justice are nothing more than hollow rhetoric. I think the Canadian public is beginning to understand this because through polls they are beginning to tell the Government what they think about it and its record.

I would now like to discuss the Government's claim with respect to jobs. During the election campaign one of the Government's big promises was "jobs, jobs, jobs". Again yesterday the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) boasted about the great number of jobs which he has created. Of course, he did not say too much about the quality of those jobs, the level of pay, or the fact that many of