

*The Address—Mr. Deniger*

a difficult wage policy, that this policy will be maintained in the budget to be brought down next February 15 by the Minister of Finance. Once on our way, we must not lose ground, and it is for this reason that I look forward to an excellent and compassionate budget from the Minister of Finance next month.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I applaud the many proposals contained in the Speech from the Throne which consolidate what has already been undertaken. Emphasis has been placed on consolidating the industrial infrastructure, stimulating investment, increasing productivity and promoting co-operation between the Government, the private sector and labour.

Mr. Speaker, when I look back on the year 1983 and consider the encouraging economic outlook for 1984, I cannot understand the chronic pessimism and negativism of the Members opposite. It seems to me that we must feel happy when we get up in the morning and learn that the inflation rate in Canada is lower than 5 per cent and the bank rate of the Bank of Canada is under 10 per cent. Mr. Speaker, for the Members opposite, such good news is bad news. What sort of government would they form?

When I was in the Opposition and interest rates were going up often as a result of the Government Opposite's policies, I certainly did not rejoice, although I knew that during the Question Period, I would be in a position to stuff my questions with all sorts of statistics. However, I was saddened. Now, it would seem that the Hon. Members Opposite are delighted when inflation and interest rates rise, because they expect to make some political gains out of it. What sort of Government would we have if we had the misfortune to see them assume power?

The Opposition is blaming us for each and every ill and burden we are faced with; yet, who is responsible for controlling inflation? Who has brought down interest rates? Who has created again an atmosphere of confidence and persuaded businessmen to invest and consumers to spend? Who has helped our economy to recover faster than expected? It is our party, Mr. Speaker, and certainly not theirs. This Government has certainly overcome most of the obstacles. And it is clearly our Government, which has shown Canada the way to the 21st Century by offering more funds and tax incentives in the area of research and development, so that Canadian technology may successfully meet the challenge of the technological revolution. Moreover, in spite of the recession, the Government has tried to increase Canada's trade potential. That is why we undertook for instance, Mr. Speaker, as you know, of course, to substantially change one of our sacrosanct institutions in Canada, that is the Crow rate.

The old freight rate for grain had resulted in a gradual deterioration of our railway system in Western Canada. No one would deny it. And thanks to the legislation that was passed by Parliament last fall, we will now have an infrastructure, we will have railway lines that will actually enable

Western farmers to increase their production and, in so doing, increase the shipments through the port of Vancouver, which seems once again to upset the Members Opposite who often do not want to hear good news unless they announce it themselves in their ridings, once they are in power. Good heavens, that will take time!

Well then, Hon. Members will be pleased to know that from now on, Western farmers will be able to increase their crops. In so doing, they will increase their shipments by railway and, at the same time, increase the traffic through the port of Vancouver. As a result, the Canadian economy will pick up again even more and foreign trade will increase. It would take a clever man, Mr. Speaker, to understand the position of Hon. Members opposite on the Crow legislation.

Let us keep in mind what their position was, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), the former Minister of Transport, said at the time, if my memory serves me right, that the difference between the Opposition and the party in power was a mere technicality. What a technicality, Mr. Speaker, when the former Minister of Transport, the Hon. Member for Vegreville, states openly in committee that what he wants actually is the status quo, a three-year moratorium.

Why? Because a choice had to be made. It is not easy to make a choice but to govern is to choose. The Hon. Member was not prepared to do so when he was in power. How could I believe that Hon. Members opposite would be prepared to do so if, heaven forbid, they should come into power? They would not be able to make a choice because beside being a negativist party the Conservatives are strictly an opposition party.

As a matter of fact, they have mastered the art of skating around issues or, more exactly, of changing their mind ever so often depending on which way the wind is blowing. Yet people should be able to know the positions and policies of the various political parties at the federal level. They deserve at least that much consideration on the part of their representatives.

We have to recognize that the Official Opposition loves to deal with unclear issues and that this Government in waiting has no vision. A political group such as this which constantly changes its mind and shifts positions does not represent in my opinion a valid alternative and is in no position to criticize everything.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that time is running out. I would have liked to speak about air traffic control, a subject that is dear to my heart but, with your permission I might go back to it during a debate on transport. In closing, I should like to say that the Canadian people, obviously, are looking for substantial and concrete policies and we find that the Hon. Opposition Leader can only come in every day with vague and nebulous motions. He is in for a few surprises as was mentioned in the editorial of the *Edmonton Journal* in its December 30 issue and I quote: