

The Address—Mr. Stevens

Believe me, Mr. Speaker, after hearing the two opposition Parties demanding that spending and the deficit be maintained, I can only ask them: When will they learn the lesson? If deficits were the solution to our unemployment situation in Canada, we should be booming today instead of having 1.5 million Canadians out of work. So if we are making some earnest efforts to narrow that deficit, I would think he would be shouting hallelujah; at last someone is trying to get the economy back on a more satisfactory basis. Deficits have not worked. When are you fellows ever going to learn that?

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, the Minister spoke glowingly about selling off the assets of CDC, and one of those assets is Eldorado Resources Limited. Does he really believe that he will be able to sell off a corporation like Eldorado Resources when the Government continues to give exemptions to the further processing of our uranium resource? There has been a policy in this country for some 10 years that we upgrade our uranium in Canada. The Government has gone to the expense of building a uranium refinery in Blind River and another one in Port Hope to upgrade these resources. That was done on the basis that the Canadian uranium being sold to the U.S. or West Germany or wherever would be processed in Canada. Now, as recently as in the last month and a half, the Government has given a further exemption to upgrading, and our refineries and upgrading facilities are operating at about one-third of capacity. Does the Hon. Minister really believe that you can ever sell off an industry which is operating at one-third capacity, and will he stop giving these exemptions to further upgrading in Canada, which is really taking jobs away from Canadians and giving them to workers in other countries?

The other question I wanted to put to the Hon. Minister concerned his reference to creating new business enterprises and getting the Government out of the business community's hair. There has been a policy in Canada for many years that the Department of National Revenue would give advance rulings on corporate mergers and partnerships. The Government withdrew that in October of this year after it came to power so that companies such as Algoma Steel and Tembec could not go ahead with important business developments. Why not clear that away? The Government has made some changes in the last week in that policy, but there are still three or four hurdles where the company has to make a proposal before a certain time and has to complete its deal by December 15. I think those requirements are unreasonable. If you are going to apply a grandfather clause to a policy like that, it should be wide open so that projects like the one by Algoma Steel can get under way. It would mean 700 jobs would be created and the Government would really be getting out of the business community's hair instead of creating this kind of interference in which the Government has been involved in the last couple of months.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) let me say that he touched on the possibility of selling Eldorado back to the private sector. I

know that most Liberals have a very pessimistic streak about them, but I can assure the Hon. Member that he would be most encouraged if he knew the interest being shown with respect to the possibility of acquiring or buying Eldorado itself. In due course I think we will be very pleased to be able to tell him what actually is transpiring with respect to the privatization of that company.

He also referred to the moratorium placed on tax rulings with respect to the setting up of certain partnerships. Again I am rather startled to hear the Hon. Member defend this process, which was a boondoggle that the former Liberal government allowed to continue. It became a tremendous rip-off. Brokers were making hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars simply on the flushing of funds through corporate entities. I am startled that the Hon. Member would suggest that we should not have drawn back and said that there has been enough and we must put a halt to what the previous government tolerated, for whatever reason. If he checks the facts, I believe he will find that that was a very prudent move on our part.

● (1150)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for questions and comments is now over. We will resume debate with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy).

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to participate in this Throne Speech debate, coming as it does so closely after the wonderful rendition and readings from the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens). I am also pleased to be able to participate as a result of the judgment and wisdom of the electors in my constituency who have now elected me some five times in a row both provincially and federally. I know it was a matter of some deep interest to certain members of the Conservative Party, particularly the Leader. I am glad to be able to come back and share with my colleagues our notions about how the country should or should not be governed.

The Throne Speech is giving us an opportunity to finally flush the wolves out of the sheep's clothing. I know that using the word "wolf" is somewhat sensitive to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), and I apologize for it. However, the fact is that we have been given the opportunity for the first time to shear away—

Mr. Stevens: Why are you shearing a wolf?

Mr. Axworthy: We will find out more about the wolves in sheep's clothing this evening. We will leave that for the national television network to deal with.

My point is that we now have the opportunity in this debate clearly to come to grips with the differences between the rhetoric and the reality; between the honeycombed, wonderfully modulated, deeply versed words of change, confidence and consultation, and to what is really happening. It is totally different from all the public relations presentations we have heard since September 4.