

work toward the provision of an income support program for individuals not able to enter the labour force because they were handicapped, or because there was no job available in the area, or because a single parent had family responsibilities. In addition there should be supplementation of earnings, with the creation of a work incentive measure to ensure that every Canadian would be better off at work than receiving income support.

Before concluding this review of the progress made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the government over the last two years at federal-provincial meetings, one must remember the economic climate in which this progress is being made. Our economy has been growing at a rapid rate over the last four or five years and the government has been allocating a large part of that growth toward alleviating the burdens and sometimes the distress of the lower income members of the Canadian community.

The federal government will continue to be concerned for the well being of the community as a whole. I should like to quote a statement made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare at the February provincial health ministers meeting. At page 14 of his speech he said:

So long as it lies within the power of the government of Canada, it will not be the poor and the economically weak who will be asked to bear the brunt of economic difficulties confronted by the western world.

May I sum up by saying that as a result of these meetings and the framework that now lies between the federal and provincial ministers of welfare, the Minister of National Health and Welfare views this framework from two perspectives. It will be designed to provide an income to those who have been unable to find jobs and to reinforce the work incentives for all who are working but at low wages. This can only help the economy over a long period and will also provide some kind of assurance that the legitimate needs of all Canadians in need of assistance will be met.

This illustrates that the government is aware of the needs of all individuals in Canada. It has shown its concern by providing innovative and new programs of the kind I have already referred to in my speech tonight. These programs have already been referred to by other speakers on behalf of the government, such as the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) who discussed the housing needs of all Canadians. As I have said, this illustrates the government is concerned about the economy of this country. I see my time has expired, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, as a member of the official opposition representing an area of Canada that has shared the problems caused for all Canadians by the government's mishandling of the economy, I am pleased to take part in this debate tonight. To restore the health of our economy will take more than a new budget. I fear it will take new leadership in Canada.

Since coming to Ottawa I have become aware that, for the members of this administration, power is not a means to an end, a tool for doing away with the injustices in our society and for alleviating the problems of many Canadians. Instead, the holding of power has become an end in

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itself. Canadians have become cynical about those of us in politics, and they have every reason to be cynical. They question whether the government has any goals for our society, any blueprint for the future, and they fear that it prefers the trappings of office to the potential that possession of public office holds for making this a freer and more humane society.

Even the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his supporters must feel a twinge of embarrassment to recall the promises made in the summer of 1968 that a new administration under this Prime Minister would provide Canadians with a just society, because during his six and a half years as Prime Minister the inequities among our citizens have increased instead of declined, the freedom of individual Canadians to live their lives in peace has been further restricted by ever-increasing taxes and miles of new government red tape, and our economy has been laid waste by a government without the will or the imagination to bring in strong measures to put our economic affairs in order.

In my own constituency, which is located in the heart of our most prosperous province, the effects of the government's failure to provide leadership have been deeply felt. Our people are among the most industrious and most fiercely independent anywhere in this country, but our small businessmen are smothered by bureaucratic restrictions and taxed almost to the point where they would be better to close their doors.

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Our farmers, many of whom have been on the same land for several generations, are leaving their farms in record numbers. Our working men are being laid off as the effects of the current recession deepen. Our senior citizens have found their life savings stolen by the tax of inflation, and many of them do not even know where they will find the money for next month's rent. Our young people are beginning to realize that their hopes of some day owning a home of their own have vanished. The memory of last summer's election campaign when they were told by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) that "leadership is the issue" is a bitter memory in the winter of 1975.

If our farmers are to stay on the land they need more than hollow promises from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), because promises will not cover their production costs. If small business men are to continue in business they need more than smug assurances that the problems are worse in France, or Germany, or the Soviet Union. If the working people are to save for their retirement they need to know that their savings will not be taxed away either directly to finance governmental empire building or indirectly through the menace of inflation.

I am appalled that it is necessary to remind the Minister of Finance that there is more to being a minister of the Crown than driving around in a chauffeured limousine, or attending important meetings in other countries, or having battalions of assistants to make work for each other. He has a responsibility second only to that of the Prime Minister to provide leadership in solving this country's problems.