

Summer Recess

Finance (Mr. Bussi eres) lay great emphasis on the gradualist approach that they are adopting, on the gradual way in which they are attacking the country's economy. The only result they are having is to make the economy and times in Canada gradually worse and worse for more and more people of this country. It is worse now than it was in May, when the minister reluctantly forecast an appreciable drop in the over-all inflation rate; and it was worse in May than it was in February, when the Minister of Finance sat there and smiled or smirked about the questions which were put to him. My fear, given the record of this government, given its inertia, given its lack of political will, given its lacklustre performance, is that during the next three months, when the House will no longer be in session, the cost of living will soar beyond the wildest estimates.

This is a very difficult time for a good many people in this country; 1981 has not been kind to them. Some are out of jobs because of the government's fiasco of an energy policy. It is driving people out of business, and business out of oil rigs, and out of the energy future of this country, and some people are out of jobs because of the bungling of the government's handling of the Post Office situation. Small business after small business, collection firms and magazine outlets, are having to close because of the government's bungling of the negotiations. Some people are out of their homes because of the runaway mortgage rates in the country. They look to government to provide leadership through difficult times, and the government hits them with a double whammy of a record high cost of living rate and record high interest rates. Is it any wonder that Canadians are becoming fractious, cynical, and angry? Government policies are not only adversely affecting their livelihood, but they are also sapping the strength, the vitality, the energy and the spirit of Canadians. The country deserves better than this. Certainly, it deserves a better government than this.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: I mentioned that Canadians were getting cynical. Is it any wonder that they are getting cynical when they remember what the Liberal party promised in response to a *Financial Post* questionnaire on February 16, 1980? The Liberal party said this about the cost of living and inflation:

Inflation is the key problem. If it can be reduced, the problem of high interest rates will be lessened. To deal with inflation, we must deal with expectations. While the Liberal party remains committed to gradual reduction in the growth of money supply and government expenditure restraint, more important, it will not contribute to a buildup in expectations through inflationary tax hikes or excessive oil price increases.

That, from the party that 13 times, since it has come to office, has increased energy prices in this country! That is what it has done. Is it any wonder that Canadians are cynical about things which are said to them before an election, and then the opposite is done by a government in power after the election? I suppose that it would be too much to expect any cabinet minister to have entered this closure debate today with some positive suggestions as to how our cost of living could go down for a change instead of always going up; but surely it is not too

much to ask, to demand that, when this threadbare bankrupt government meets the House again this autumn, it do so with a budget designed to stimulate the Canadian economy rather than suck from it the last vestige of vigour and strength that it possesses.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, during this adjournment debate it seems it is not only desirable for us, but probably our duty, to carry out an assessment of the past, to identify our problems and to seek solutions, so that we can learn not only from our successes but also from our mistakes, and also try to improve the future. It seems to me to be a tragic but indelible part of our political mythology to act as if our own party never makes a mistake and that the other party can do no good. It seems to me that if that is our approach, one can never learn or grow, nor, for that matter, can one gain the trust of others with such an obviously simplistic point of view.

Some of my constituents have said to me that when they see me on television, either speaking or seated in the House, that I look serious and sombre. I look serious and sombre. They wonder why that is the case. Perhaps it is because that is the way I look but I think it is mainly because that is the way I feel.

● (2340)

Each of us when we ran for Parliament had our own hopes. When we ran for Parliament we had our own expectations for our work as an MP and also for what we hoped to find in the House of Commons. Certainly I can say I had hoped there would be more room and scope for dialogue and much less confrontation. I hoped we would be evolving from the sterile systems of the past that played up to extremism, extreme statements and scapegoating, and that instead we would be moving forward with the introduction of television, because people would be watching us, to a system that would be more sincere, more adaptable, productive and useful, as we move toward the twenty-first century.

But no, Mr. Speaker; our ears are daily assaulted with loud accusations or venomous attacks directed against hon. members. If not that, then insinuations of guilt by association such as, unfortunately, we have endured for the last several days in remarks directed against Senator Austin and people who cannot defend themselves because they are not here but in another place.

There have been attacks against civil servants who are not here and cannot defend themselves. It is an irony that Parliament should hold people guilty until they are proved innocent.

This is hardly the place then, to come for reasoned or logical argument. There is very little genuine communication taking place here in this chamber.

As we look back over the session so far, each of us may have his or her own personal opinions about it. Old timers may compare it with former sessions and rate this session, on the