

any matter, what do they do? They call for a survey. And on the basis of that survey, they make a decision. Mr. Speaker, this is not the kind of leadership that Canadians expect, it is not the leadership that will attract people in 1984. Of course, there is the other outlook, that of the former Minister of Finance, the Hon. Member for St. John West (Mr. Crosbie). That outlook, Mr. Speaker, is subjected to the rule of silence, because in a report published in *Maclean's* magazine 1983, not so long ago as you surely remember, the former Minister of Finance suggested that, if their policies were known, if they were published, they would never get elected. So, their second philosophy is that of the Hon. Member for St. John West, the former Minister of Finance. Consequently since they won't speak their minds surveys win the day. And as we already knew, surveys favour medicare. This is why out of the blue, the Tories developed a liking for medicare. They had marked time, they had wobbled, and suddenly, to quote Dave Todd who had this to say in the *Citizen* on December 15, 1983:

● (1730)

[English]

It took 48 years of royal commissions and a major act of political will to give Canadians a national medicare system. It took 48 hours for the federal Conservatives to endorse the Trudeau Government's Canada Health Act.

[Translation]

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is a fact. I can hardly wait to hear them put up convincing arguments in favour of universal access to Medicare, to see them fight for universal access to health care which has been one of the priorities of Members of the Liberal Party and which must indeed remain the underlying principle of our social policy. I am not at all sure that the Progressive Conservatives are sincere, and that is why I think—and I am saying this to my colleagues on the Government benches—that we will have to put up a strong fight in the weeks and months ahead to prevent the destruction of one of our best social programs.

Mr. Speaker, are we going to allow one kind of medical care for the poor and another for the rich? Or, as Mr. Jean Paré wrote in last September's issue of the magazine *Actualité*, a Cadillac-type medical care and a Lada-type medical care? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. That would be the easy way out, it would amount to discarding a social contract whose human dimensions call for utmost consideration. Medicare is the most outstanding example of a collective effort whereby the rich help the poor and where the cost of medical and hospital care is paid by all Canadians so that everyone is entitled to the same quality of service. That, in my view, amounts to fulfilling our social responsibilities. It is not merely, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) said, "an obligation to show tenderness". Our first and foremost obligation, Mr. Speaker, is to stand by our convictions to the end. Even at that, Mr. Speaker, one must have some convictions to start with, and in that regard, of course, the Progressive Conservative Party is far from meeting the expectations of Hon. Members of this

*The Address—Mr. Deniger*

House and of all Canadians. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition did not leave any doubt about that the day after the Throne Speech, when he had a golden opportunity to show his convictions and to express his policies. He had at his disposal the best forum he could ever dream of, the House of Commons, with live television coverage on every channel bringing his words directly into each and every Canadian home. What did he do, Mr. Speaker? He merely chose to tell stories, to give us trite remarks. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that if I had had such an opportunity, I would not have wasted it and Canadians would have known once and for all what I was made of! They know now that the Hon. Member is a great storyteller, but that is about all. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time the Canadian people learn exactly what it is all about, and they will recognize that this Government went all the way and made every effort in order to meet its goals during a difficult period, in these times of recession. We know how difficult it is to conciliate both social and economic considerations. We have heard endless criticism about the size of the deficit. Yet, how do you preserve what has been achieved while at the same time helping those most hard hit by the recession and also finding money to create jobs and stimulate the economy? And all this, without raising expenditures? In the depths of the recession, Mr. Speaker, we could not lower the deficit because this would have had the effect of worsening the impact of the recession on the poor. A choice had to be made. We chose the lesser of two evils, we chose to come to the aid of individual Canadians. However, as soon as the situation improved, and we know that it is getting better every day, the Government hastened to introduce economic policies aimed at curbing inflation, restraining Government expenditures and of course, in turn, reducing the size of the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the 6 and 5 per cent policy was introduced. And with all due deference to my colleagues opposite, it has been a real success. The people support that policy and they probably want it to continue. The Minister of Finance will probably tell us about that on February 15.

With the tabling of the budget last April, the foundations of an economic recovery were laid. It was a long term strategy to restore confidence and create a good climate for recovery. A consultation process was launched with the main protagonists in business, organized labour, the co-operative sector and political quarters and it is specifically such a process which enabled us to introduce a budget which everybody welcomed and more important, which made Canada's record the envy of the free world in 1983. Mr. Speaker, we have gone a long way on the road to a national economic recovery, and the private sector is now in a better position to make investments. But in spite of a constant improvement of financial conditions, there still remains a lot to be done before Canada recovers from all the losses incurred during the recession.

Mr. Speaker, it is precisely to keep up these efforts entered upon in 1983, following the budget and the implementation of