

ensure that there is not one chicken in every pot but two.”

But what we did not know in Atlantic Canada was that they might have been giving us a chicken but they were taking our fish. We know that now, Mr. Speaker. These people came to power in 1984 on a thinly veiled Liberal agenda. They tried to be Liberals. They tried to talk about social progressivism. They tried to talk about a marriage between free enterprise and management of an economy and government intervention when necessary to support the regions of this country least able to look after themselves, and people in that same circumstance.

Well, perhaps the biggest lie—and this will go down in history I am sure—that we have ever heard in a campaign was what the Conservative party handed out during the election campaign. I alluded to it earlier in a question and comment. What I said was that every time the New Democratic Party or the Liberal party put a plank forward in their campaigns, the Tory party would dismiss it.

I remember the Minister of Finance saying—and I hope your selective memory is turned off and you can hear it clearly now—that these were not promises. These were spending commitments. Well, if they were spending commitments that were made in the fall of 1988, they were written with disappearing ink. The day after these rogues got re-elected they came into the Chamber and all of a sudden the books were changed. Surely to goodness from 1984 to 1988, if they had any competency at all, they would have been able to find out where the books were.

Either they were so incompetent between 1984 and 1988 that they did not know what fiscal and economic circumstances they had at their disposal in 1988, prior to the campaign, or they did not tell Canadians the truth. I don't know which sin is worse. I will leave that for the electorate to decide at the next election.

• (1830)

The government came back saying: “We've got the money. We've got the programs”. I do not know how these ladies and gentlemen opposite can sit in their seats when they know very well that the day after the election campaign, all of a sudden, the Prime Minister's polls told him he should go out and spook the Canadian public about the deficit because we convinced them during the

### *Government Orders*

campaign that it was not a problem. If the deficit is a problem, we had better spend some taxpayers' money to change their minds. That is exactly what they set out to do.

The non-problem deficit in November all of a sudden in December became this onerous, triple-headed monster that would devour the Canadian economy. The Tories would rally on their horse to save Canadians from that terrible fate. What did they do? They reneged and squelched on every promise and commitment. I will not call them promises, I will call them what the Minister of Finance called them. He called them spending commitments. The government squelched on its commitments.

What has the government done since being elected? Government members are in this Chamber today asking us to approve Bill C-65, the borrowing authority, which will mean that we agree with their spending priorities.

They used to talk about jobs, jobs, jobs but in actual fact it has turned into cuts, cuts, cuts. Look at what they did in regional development. It is a big shell game. They can talk their best rhetoric on the other side of the House about windows, five-year averages, seven-year averages, you can put flour and milk in and make a nice cake for the people of Atlantic Canada, the fact of life in relative terms, and I quote very loosely because I do not have exact figures in front of me.

The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council has done studies which show in relative terms that the degree of disparity between central Canada, or Canada on average, and Atlantic Canada has grown. You do not have to be a mathematical wizard to sit down and look at the indicators to see that. Look at the level of unemployment *vis-à-vis* the percentage of national unemployment in 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987. You will find there is a growing gap between the rich and the poor in this country. The government says: “Yes, but everyone is better off than in 1982, 1983, 1984.” We were in a recession then.

What I am trying to put forward to members opposite is that during the intervening years of recovery—and some have recovered much quicker than others, it has taken place world-wide—the government should have taken the opportunity, if it had a heart, to redistribute the new resources to the poorer areas of the country to