

Speech from the Throne

with particular reference to the tribunal. They referred to the labour bill with its features regarding technological change and referred to high management being unionized. They were concerned about the poor draftmanship in these bills. In at least one instance, the tax bill recently forced upon us, I know this is to be true. We know that the bill is not in a perfect state and that amendments have been made to amendments to amendments and that there will be further amendments. But the government has the gall to say that they have removed any uncertainty from the business sector and from the private sector, meaning the individual. How can there be any confidence, how can they say that there is no uncertainty when there are still amendments pending?

Another point they brought up, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this government does not listen to the points brought out in the briefs submitted. They hear the phrase "participatory democracy" and are invited to send their briefs, but they indicated to me that they believe this means nothing because the briefs are thrown in the wastepaper basket. I have already said that all the brains in this country are not in the House of Commons.

Mr. Bell: Not on the other side, anyway.

Mr. Alexander: There are brains outside this place; as a matter of fact, there are more outside than inside. The government would be well advised to pay more attention, and particularly the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. McBride). I told the House what is going to happen to him. Another matter they were concerned about was the philosophy of this government. They do not know what that philosophy is.

An hon. Member: They don't have one.

Mr. Alexander: I cannot tell you. I want you to tell the Canadian people. What is your philosophy? Where are you going?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: Where are you going? You have the whole country upset and frustrated about what Canada is going to be like in the next six years.

Mr. Crouse: They are going out in the cold; that is where they are going.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I want to let you know that Hamilton is concerned about the economic climate. As an industrial city it is extremely concerned, obviously, about the type of legislation that is introduced, the philosophy behind it and whether it provides any incentives. We do not think that the government has thought about this. I hope the new Minister of Finance will take everything under review and that past mistakes will not be used as a basis for any new philosophy he may develop. That is what concerns me.

• (1240)

At the significant finance ministers conference in Jasper the Minister of Finance made it clear that he really does not have the intellectual baggage to explain new mistakes with new rationales. He decided, instead, to settle down and carry the flag of chronic errors and

shortcomings. The minister said he was going to undertake a study in order to find new ways to control inflation. Such a study is certainly called for. We have not yet seen any of the research studies of the Prices and Incomes Commission. Undertaking them was one of its primary responsibilities. Also, Mr. Speaker, we have experienced two and a half years of mass unemployment because the government decided to fight inflation the old way.

Inflation has appeared again and unemployment is massive. Are we to repeat past erroneous policies or introduce a new policy? In Jasper this matter was clarified. More retainers may be paid and more research studies undertaken, but the underlying policy is not about to change. I hope the Minister of Finance will correct me if I am wrong in this regard. I hope he will indicate I am wrong. The minister of Finance made it clear that he believes inflation at present is primarily caused by excessive demand pull. He said that there should be a moderation in the government sector. While the provinces and most advisers disagree, the Minister of Finance made it clear that, even though 665,000 are unemployed, accelerated economic expansion should be rejected. Furthermore, he repeated the ill-advised and malicious proposition that governments must continue trading off jobs to control prices. He said:

We have to watch very carefully now the balance between the problem of unemployment and the problem of rising prices.

I hope he will explain that.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member would be good enough to distinguish between what I said and reportorial remarks attributed to me in the article.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Finance will shortly be delivering his speech. He can correct me and point to any errors I have made. He said that his goal is to provide a job for every Canadian willing to work but that the speed with which this goal is reached must be consistent with stable prices. The minister hardly expressed himself in the hottest of prose; yet the message was clear: "Play it again, Sam, the old way." Why must this be so? Why can we not have a Liberal government with a new policy? Surely it is not sticking to the old policy because the old policy has proven to be right. Everyone, from Richard Nixon to Paul Hellyer, from Mel Watkins to René Levesque, knows it has not worked and that it will not work. We will not get price stability by operating away below potential and tolerating high unemployment. The only consequence of that policy has been human misery, national disunity and the exaggeration of those very structural faults that produce chronic inflation.

Why is the government adopting that position? Surely the reason cannot be that this government is cold and indifferent. After all, we must assume the Minister of Finance wants to be liked and that the Prime Minister would rather be loved than hated. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we can achieve stable prices within a strategy of full employment. We can reduce the differences in incomes and employment between all the regions. We can have a more just society. There is a will in this country, and there are resources and policies available to accomplish this goal. All that is required is a co-ordinated federal effort and the confidence of the private sector. I suggest that