

shelter allowance as part of that credit plan. Let us do something for the tenants in this country. Let us do something for those in real need. Let us attach a shelter allowance to that tax credit program. Let us show how much members really care. That seems to me to be a fairly logical sentiment. It is one that we have talked about and urged upon this government. I say adopt that proposal, Mr. Speaker, and they will have our support. If they do that it will be the first time the government will show that it is not trying to divide society but instead trying to spread the benefits around.

The problem with this particular program is not only who gets immediate benefits, it is also what we are giving up for the future. The Prime Minister says he is very concerned about the future. How can he be concerned about the future when it is foreclosed? It is foreclosed by committing an expenditure of \$2.3 billion or more, totally using up all discretionary income and having nothing left in the purse for any other programs. If someone comes along and says he is concerned, as many Canadians are, about the problem of safety in the streets, what does this government have to offer? Nothing. The money has been spent. Perhaps someone will come along and ask if we can do something for public transit, and we ask the question what can we do to help get better transportation in this country? But we find there is nothing left in the till. We have foreclosed the mortgage. We have spent the money. We have locked ourselves in to the commitments for the future and we have nothing left.

A commitment has been made, Mr. Speaker, and these people do not know how to get out of it. They are going to wriggle and wrangle, and in the meantime the only people they will hurt are the people in this country. To conclude on that note, if they have not gone far enough, they are designing a program that is unequal in its benefits and illogical in its economics; but they have decided to give the *coup de grâce*. Now they are talking about getting rid of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They are not satisfied with simply using up all the money in housing, they are going to get rid of the very agency which the federal government has used to make sure that there are proper programs for social groups across Canada. This is all in the name not of any logical reason, but in this new theology, this new religion, in the name of privatization. You develop a certain blindness when you become so concerned about what is right that you forget what is good. There are many other examples that one could use. For instance, the cutbacks in Canada Works which has led to serious unemployment problems; the UIC cutbacks, all in the area of picking on those who are least able to defend themselves.

**An hon. Member:** The Liberals started it.

**Mr. Axworthy:** I want to spend a moment or two on what is an even more surprising betrayal, to my mind. It is surprising and perhaps ironic. It is a real betrayal of western Canada by this government. It is surprising because this has been the basis of its support for so many years. Western Canadians for their own reasons have said, "We believe the Conservatives

will serve our interests". The benches are full of members from western Canada. We have had Tory MPs who have made careers out of lambasting Liberal governments for their neglect of the west. We have a very clear case now of western Canada being on the verge of a major economic breakthrough, and this government is going to pull the rug out from under its feet.

We have talked a lot in this House about the issue of Petro-Canada, but the one thing that we have not talked about is what it means to western Canadians. Petro-Canada is the largest Canadian-owned oil company. Not only is it the largest, it is the only one located in Calgary and it has 2,000 employees. All the rest of the big multinationals that members opposite are giving up are located in the east. It is the only oil firm that has invested millions in research and development of new technologies in liquefied natural gas and in drilling in the Arctic. This research and development gives western Canada the opportunity to develop new technology that can be applied throughout the world. But who is selling it off? It is those western Tories who are selling it off. They are the ones who are betraying their own region and giving up on it.

I want them to go back and explain that kind of betrayal. This is the first time the opportunity has come to develop an economic institution which has its roots, foundations and activity centred in western Canada and which can provide an enormous stimulus for various independent western Canadian businessmen. Let me give just one example. One of the rules Petro-Canada works under is that it has a 25 per cent reserve on Crown lands. Its practice in the past was to take that 25 per cent reserve and allocate it to the small independent oil exploration firms in western Canada because they could not afford the upfront money that the big multinationals could provide. They have asked those small independents to form consortiums and they give them the Crown land reserves. They are the ones who for the first time in a long while are being allowed to come into the Arctic development, the Newfoundland development and the other forms of oil development in western Canada. It is Petro-Canada that is enabling them to develop a brand new business class in western Canada. Yet this government is pulling the rug out from under their feet. We have a direct economic betrayal of the best interests of western Canada in their action on Petro-Canada, and they will pay a heavy price for that kind of betrayal.

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It does not stop there. With regard to oil pricing there is a danger that one province will be set against the other over who gets the benefits from the oil price. This country cannot long survive if there is an increasing disparity between the have and have-not energy provinces. If this government allows the price of oil to go to the present world level it will pull \$460 million out of the economy of my own province of Manitoba, and we cannot survive that kind of reduction. If this first minister thinks he is going to get Peter Lougheed to agree to some other distribution, he has been reading the wrong newspapers and the wrong speeches, because Mr. Lougheed has said very clearly that he is not interested in that kind of distribution. He