

The Address—Mr. Boyer

on the free enterprise economy because of the destruction it allegedly creates for the environment.

My view—and I think it is the view of our Party—is clearly that we can do more, including on environmental issues, with a dynamic, active economy than when matters are stagnant. Certainly the people who are the workers of the country, given that trade-off between jobs and environment, know their priority. We want to get the economy strong. We want to get the country into a high level of productivity. From that vantage point, we will be able to do a great deal more.

● (1130)

It does come to the point where somebody has to start asking hard questions. This brings us to the spokesmen for the Liberal Party and the distinction which is clear between our Party and the New Democratic Party. That is now uncertain when it comes to the Liberals, whose principal spokesman, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner), and leading spokesmen of that Party, have time and time again said that deficit reduction is important. Yet we have heard from so many individual members of the Liberal caucus who have stood up with a book and pointed and said: "Well, this has been cut, this has been pared, cuts, cuts, cuts". They are going in one direction when it seems that all of Canada and the new Government, which at long last is in phase with the mainstream of Canadian thinking, is going in the opposite direction.

The Liberals, who have been opposing all of these cuts no matter where they come from, reflect an attitude that is absolutely out of phase with the whole spirit that is now burgeoning in this country as we try to formulate the right blueprint for economic renewal. The Canadian people, who spoke so eloquently on September 4, continue in their eloquence to respond to pollsters and have now recorded their popular support for the Liberal Party, which is going in the opposite direction from this Government and the rest of the country, at an all-time low.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, is the Hon. Member serious when he says that he is concerned about the poor and underprivileged and that he will not do anything to hurt them? He supports the cuts that were announced the other night, one of which was for social housing in the amount of \$9.6 million. Is he suggesting seriously that, if you cut that amount, it will be picked up by the private sector, that the private sector is going to finance housing at a loss? I am thinking of senior citizens, the handicapped people and the poor. Is the Hon. Member serious when he tells us that? How do we make up for that housing? The document put out by his own Government states:

These savings will be achieved through unit reductions and program modifications.

Is the Hon. Member telling us that this country can tolerate unit reductions in social housing for senior citizens, the handicapped people and the poor? Is that what he is telling us?

Mr. Boyer: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asks if I am serious. I have never been more serious about anything in my life. The volume with which the Hon. Member asked his

question, in spite of the fact that we have amplification equipment in this Chamber, reminds me of the preacher who wrote beside part of his text "argument weak, shout loud". Another metaphor is the inability of the Hon. Member to see the forest for the trees. He is looking at specific items here and there.

Let me ask him whether he and his Party were serious when they were telling the Canadian people that deficit reduction was fundamental to get this country back on the right track. If they believed that when they said it, how can they in conscience come and lament, protest and grieve over individual, specific cuts? The proposals that the Minister of Finance has announced for seniors, veterans and in other programs that will be coming forth will show that this Government does not lack for compassion. Indeed, compassion and a care for ordinary men and women of this country is right at the heart of the traditions of this country.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has not answered the question. I referred to a specific cut of \$9.6 million for social housing. He has not answered that question. The reason I am upset is that I have some social housing projects in my riding. The people there are very concerned that these projects will be sold to the private sector and they will be thrown out on the street. That is why I am concerned. The Hon. Member is right, I am very upset. The Hon. Member said in his remarks that this is not Reagan North or Thatcher East. I would like him to tell us why it is not. It looks like we are going in that direction. People who are in social housing are very concerned that this will be thrown in the hands of the private sector. What those opposite are all saying is: Let the private sector do it.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose a question to the Hon. Member on a different tack. Perhaps he can explain this to me. I do not understand the Government's logic in making cuts to the budget of the National Research Council, the solar industry, wind and so on, on the mistaken assumption that they are somehow soft or leftist or something like that. Most of this money is being channelled through the NRC to private companies. The Government is going to cut all those private companies at a time when we are starting to take off in a real high technology area of the future. It must be that the Minister never really looked at what he was doing with these cuts.

I would ask the Hon. Member to comment from a different point of view, that is, on the very high-tech, logical, private sector approach that the Government seems to want to take. Why is it making these kinds of cuts? Does the Hon. Member really see any logic in the cuts? I do not see it there.

Mr. Boyer: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I think the logic is called elimination of the middle man. If the Hon. Member is telling me and this House that the private sector is benefiting from these funds and is interested in having those projects go ahead, then let us assume that that requirement, need and demand exist in the private sector and that if they cannot be on public funding, they will find funding elsewhere. There comes a point