

The Address—Mr. Harvey

incomes and those who are unemployed have to suffer as this Government has dictated they must.

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We shall now continue the debate. The Hon. Member for Chicoutimi.

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in having been given this opportunity to speak in the House for the first time as the Member for the riding of Chicoutimi, which includes the entire Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area, probably one of the worst examples of the disastrous and bankrupt administration of the former Liberal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that individual Members alone cannot change the way this country is administered, but as a Member of the Progressive Conservative Party, I am convinced that this Government has the will to make very decisive changes in the way the affairs of this country are administered.

A few days ago, the Government announced to all Canadians its main political and economic objectives. On the whole, reactions have been very positive. This is because for the first time in twenty-two years a government, and in this case our new Government, has put the cards on the table so that all Canadians can understand the gravity of this country's financial situation. Our Government looks to the future, Mr. Speaker, but we cannot shake off the legacy of the past. The Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) have highlighted the main problems facing this country. If we compare the country's finances to other budgets, be they family, municipal or provincial, the gravity of the mistakes that have been made suddenly looms very large.

Anyone who, over a period of fifteen years, manages to go from a deficit of zero to \$35 billion is bound to be in serious trouble. Increasing the deficit certainly does not create jobs. Our Liberal friends opposite are claiming that budgetary cutbacks will bring about the loss of between 50,000 and 100,000 jobs. If increasing the deficit is supposed to create jobs, I wonder why the Liberals, who increased the deficit by more than 20 billion over the last four years, did not create 500,000 jobs instead of 1,500,000 unemployed? This means that the actual situation, if we look at the figures, is far more serious and should be taken far more seriously than our friends opposite have been doing during the past few weeks.

Most families or municipalities or provinces would be in a very bad way if over the last ten or twelve years, they had multiplied their debt load by ten. Most people who owed \$18,000 twelve years ago and were living on a very strict budget, would be in serious trouble if twelve years later they owed \$180,000. That is exactly what we are up against in this country today.

Mr. Speaker, all this illustrates the relevance of some comments by Mr. Jérôme Choquette, who for a long time was

not opposed to Liberal views. Mr. Choquette said, on the basis of his considerable experience in municipal affairs, that many provincial and federal administrators would do well to get some experience in managing a municipal budget, with the obligation to explain to the community why their taxes are being raised.

One of the main reasons why the public reaction has been positive is that the government is open. The second explanation for the satisfaction expressed by the people about the reasons given by the government to justify the significant change of course we are about to make is that over the past three months, our government has heeded the overwhelming desire for change voiced on September 4. The people did not put us in office to steer the same course but to change it altogether. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for a Member to agree to get down to politics with restricted prospects. We are not being asked to tour plants and visit social organizations handing out grants for electoral purposes, no, we are being urged to act as a responsible administration and implement short-, medium- and long-term policies.

That is a challenge for a politician, but I suggest that it is the only way to come to grips with the very serious problems facing our society and Quebec, particularly the riding of Chicoutimi and the Lac-Saint-Jean area. These are not empty words: the unemployment rate in my region is not 5, 10 or 15 per cent, it is 25 per cent, nothing less. I happen to represent villages where the rate of unemployment under the Liberals in office for 22 years has soared to 50 per cent. Given such hard facts, Mr. Speaker, I simply have to make a summary analysis of the political orientations advocated in the Speech from the Throne and their impact on my riding. I intend to devote a few minutes of my speech to that aspect.

● (1620)

The first of the four major orientations contained in the Speech from the Throne has to do with national reconciliation. If there is one theme which matters to Quebecers, if there is one theme which is significant in a region like Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean where most people voted yes in the referendum, that theme has to be the national reconciliation. To put it in another way, everything must be done to end the polarization of the ideological debate between Quebec and Ottawa, not to mention the municipalities. We had to live through—in any case that was my personal experience as municipal administrator—conflicts sparked by endless arguments between Ottawa and Quebec, and we had a rough time because costs keep soaring when both sides cannot agree on anything. Major projects slated for my region have not been implemented for five, ten or fifteen years as a result of the ideological debate between Ottawa and Quebec. There are quite a few. How can I refrain from mentioning the case of the Saguenay National Park? We do not have eight parks in our province, only one