

Taxation

to stand up and speak the truth. They would not be the first group of parliamentarians to do that.

There are other parliaments in the world. When the President of the Privy Council finds it convenient, he will say that we must think about the Mother of Parliament. The difference between our Parliament and the Mother of Parliament at Westminster is that the government there must pay attention to its parliament because it has purpose and tradition. In the United Kingdom, the backbenchers of the Conservative Party, Labour Party and the Social Democratic Party as well have a tradition of speaking up when the government is not functioning in its people's best interest. They do not hide in the caucus room. They come out of the closet and speak on the floor of their House of Commons.

That is the purpose of this place. I invite those backbenchers, the ten who wrote the letter, to stand up, gather their courage and discuss problems that affect their country and the people who sent them here. Although ministers cannot speak out in that manner while they are members of the ministry, there must be some who care and are concerned about our situation. There must be some who do not believe the stories spread in this House every day by the Minister of Finance. They ought not to be in the government if they believe that.

There is no gratification to being in government if you must sell out your principles and sell out your electors to stay there. There is no reward in being a parliamentary secretary if it means remaining silent in the back benches. There is nothing about this place that is not representative.

There are some members opposite, who are no longer parliamentary secretaries, who should speak up. But silence seems to prevail on that side of the House.

I wish I were able to quote from a letter which was written to me by one of my constituents. He said that he was a Liberal but not a "Trudeau Liberal", if I may use that label in accordance with the rules of the House. He told me that he was in the Liberal Party years ago and was lamenting, as much as criticizing, that he followed the Right Hon. Lester Pearson because he loved and understood what confederation was all about. He said that he followed the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent because of his great sensitivity and his understanding of Parliament. However, in his letter he described how he despaired about what had happened to his party. Although he has not joined our party, he has surely left the Liberal Party. He will find no refuge in the New Democratic Party because they are, in fact, a facsimile of the Liberal Party, once you look a little closer at them. The people of Saskatchewan discovered that.

He despairs and wonders what has happened to his party and its sense of independence. He wonders what has happened to its principles because, as I have read the history of the Parliament of Canada at the time of Laurier, St. Laurent and Pearson, I find that those were men who sincerely cared about Canada. They stood for the average people, not for government intervention. They stood for the principles which some members state. According to my constituent, it is not the same party which he is still asked to support but now refuses to support. If a party is going to govern, it must deserve to be the

government. In order to do this, it must respond to the conditions in the country and it must be believed.

Let us review what has happened in Canada since the present Prime Minister became leader. The Liberal Party of Canada allowed itself to fall under the thumb of Liberal Party philosophies which did not exist during the time of St. Laurent and Pearson. Let us look at what has happened to the country as a result of this government's policies. In 1968, when the seeds were planted at the beginning of the golden years of the present Prime Minister, and took root in the minds of the gullible, the total number of unemployed Canadians was 351,000. The most recent 1982 figures show the total number of people unemployed in Canada has risen to 1,069,000. That is an increase from 4.5 per cent unemployed, which was considered high at that time, to an absolutely incredible and unacceptable 9 per cent. Those are figures supplied by Statistics Canada. That is an incredible record. Everyone on the other side and every thoughtful person knows the figures. Not only do they refer to human misery, not only do they refer to uncertainty, not only do they refer to loss of opportunity, the failure to live up to promises—

• (2130)

Mr. Riis: It is the Liberal platform.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Well, the Liberal platform, such as it is, is made of balsa wood. Not only do they refer to all of that, but they also refer to a record. It is a record for which they will have to answer, and from time to time they have been answering for it across the country. They are answering for it now across the country. I do not believe Dr. Gallup, but I do not suspect that we would be seeing the present trends evidenced by the Gallup polls if there were a believable government. I do not believe it at all. However, in the face of that trend which has meant social disaster for many families, the Liberals go to Meach Lake in those luxurious surroundings. It was there twice. They met in those luxurious surroundings—

An hon. Member: How was it?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Well, the hon. member will never get there, so I will tell him later. The Liberals discussed the economy and, in the face of statistics which reflect human misery, the Secretary of State said, "We will not do anything. We will stick to our course." We do not yet know how many people must go bankrupt, how many people or how many farmers must go down the drain before they will stop it. Is that believable from a government which really cares? Does the hon. member for London-Middlesex (Mr. Bloomfield) really believe that it is a caring government across the way which he blindly supports? I like the hon. member for London-Middlesex but I fear for his vision. I know a good optician downtown who could fix his eyes.

When one considers youth unemployment, one finds that the figures are even worse. The youth unemployment rate in 1968 was 7.4 per cent. It was 3 per cent higher than the rate for