

Housing

papers that were tabled in the House of Commons on budget night?

Can ordinary Canadians feel that their investment in their houses are safe, and that the Minister of Finance will not see this as an opportunity to attack them? I invite them to read the document and to see the words of the Minister of Finance as he talked about the inequities that were caused by the tax expenditures. Canadians should ask themselves where the logic of the Minister of Finance will lead the Liberal caucus and the Liberal Party come next budget.

What the government has done by its policies is to strike directly against the middle class in Canada. The government has struck directly against the dream of Canadian families to own a home of their own. In so doing, what it has done is to destroy the viability of our whole economic and political system in many instances. The government has created a feeling of unrest and uncertainty in the country. The government has seriously damaged the national unity on which the Prime Minister said in 1968 that he would run to protect it. The government has created feelings of bitterness throughout the country and feelings of alienation on the part of ordinary Canadians who want very much to work for this country and to build a future for themselves and their families.

What could be done by the government if it were prepared to show some leadership? The most obvious thing that could have been done if the party opposite had not obstructed the proposal which my party made in government for a tax credit for ordinary Canadian families in 1979.

A family who is paying some \$5,000 interest this year, if the Liberal caucus had not filibustered that measure and refused to allow the bill to go through, would have had some \$1,250 benefit as a result of the plan. That is this year.

The ordinary families in my constituency are facing this massive tax grab by the Liberal government today.

Mr. Cosgrove: What about renters?

Mr. Beatty: I hear the minister responsible for housing shouting out "What about renters?" I might ask the minister responsible for housing what he has done for renters. What has the minister done when there is a vacancy rate throughout the country that is so low that it is often impossible for ordinary Canadians to find accommodation for themselves that is affordable? What has the minister done for renters? What has the minister done for ordinary Canadians who are home owners? What has the minister done to act on the promise that was made by the Liberal Party when it was in opposition and opposed the mortgage interest and property tax credit? The Liberals said they opposed it because they wanted something which they felt would be better, and that was assistance for all housing in the way of a shelter grant which would apply to apartment dwellers as well. What has the minister responsible for housing done to keep his word on that shelter grant? Has he done anything? He has done nothing. It is yet another broken promise.

Mr. Evans: Do you have a spare \$3 billion lying around?

Mr. Beatty: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Evans) asks whether we have a spare billion lying around.

Mr. Evans: Three billion dollars.

Mr. Beatty: He says \$3 billion. There we are. The parliamentary secretary asks whether we have a further \$3 billion lying around. Maybe if it would cost \$3 billion, you should not have made the commitment for the shelter grant in the first place. If you could not afford it, you should not have been deluding Canadians and making false promises to them at election time.

This is the sort of cynicism we get from the Liberal Party. The present Prime Minister said "Say anything, do anything, as long as you can get and maintain power." That is the Liberal Party's principle. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance flees the House because he recognizes that that is the case. Yet in instance after instance what we have found is that promises made by the Liberal Party during the election campaign are broken. What about cheap gas? I remember that one, and so do the people in my constituency. What about promises for a shelter grant? I remember that one. Those promises have been broken, and ordinary Canadians know it.

What we have had instead is a massive tax grab on the part of the Minister of Finance, unprecedented in the history of Canada. We have had policies being put in place which penalize ordinary working Canadians, cost them their jobs, their homes, businesses and farms. And the members opposite sit silently complicitous. They go back to their constituents, shake their heads and say, "We are concerned too because we recognize your problems and we will go and talk quietly behind closed doors to the minister, try to get him to listen to reason and to change his policies."

● (1620)

Ten Liberal members, Mr. Speaker, within the past week have said they cannot do it behind closed doors any more; the only hope they have to get the government to change its disastrous policies is by putting pressure directly and publicly on the Prime Minister through this letter they released to the press. They recognize that quiet persuasion will not work; it is impossible to persuade the Minister of Finance to listen to reason.

Well, if the minister is confident his policies are serving Canadians well and they support them, I invite him to come to my constituency. Or, if he prefers, let him come to two Liberal constituencies. Let him come with me to Guelph and talk to ordinary working people there and explain his policies. Let him come to Kitchener and explain the effect of his policies on the life insurance industry, which is so important to the economy of Kitchener. Let him explain whether or not his policies were justified, and let him try to convince Canadians who are suffering at his hands that he understands their problems and is providing the sort of leadership so desperately needed by Canadians today.