

Supply

● (1530)

[English]

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take my full time as I do not believe the motion justifies that. However, I want to deal with it as best I can in a few moments.

I would begin by saying to my colleagues in the Liberal Party that, of course, we support the intent of the motion. We believe that the Government should use the industrial, decentralization, agricultural, transportation and equalization policies as well as the Crown corporations which it has available to it in order to further economic development in all communities across Canada. We subscribe to that. I find no fault with the Liberal Party's suggesting that that ought to be a matter for debate on a day such as this. However, I do seriously question whether or not the Liberal Party is accurate in suggesting that the Government should be condemned for undermining the will of Parliament and the legislatures by failing to utilize all of those available vehicles to enhance and improve the economic stability of the country.

I would like to make it quite clear that I do not for one minute believe that among the 211 Conservative Members who were elected to Parliament there is a will to use those particular methods in order to create the economic stability which we all desire. Neither do I believe that many of the provinces of Canada which have Conservative or Social Credit administrations, would suggest that Parliament ought to exercise its will and utilize those particular means available to the Government in order to solve the economic problems within the various regions over which they have jurisdiction.

I see the motion as being flawed. I agree that it is important to take advantage of everything which we have at our disposal in attempting to find ways to combat the economic downturn which has occurred in Canada. I also agree that it is appropriate to pay particular heed to the examples which have been set out by the Liberal Party in its motion. But I do not agree that it is the will of Parliament that the Government do these things. I do not believe that there is a will among those on the Tory benches to do any such thing. I do not think it has ever been exercised because I do not believe it exists.

There is a sense among some that this Government is wandering aimlessly in an economic sense and that somehow the Government does not know what it is trying to accomplish. Some people believe that the Government does not have available to it the knowledge which is sufficient to be able to chart the course, even if it did know what it wanted to do. Again, I am not sure that is true. In fact, I have begun to come around to the view that this Government knows exactly what it is doing. What we are seeing across this land is, in fact, what the Government desires to have happen. The Government does not utilize the levers of economic power it has available to it because it has chosen not to do so. The Government does not move in the public sector in order to try to create the economic

stability and, therefore, the job opportunities because the Government has chosen not to do so.

I believe the Government knows what it is doing. I believe the Government has a plan to return to the so-called good old days of private enterprise. This Government has in its mind that if only it could get rid of all the public ownership and involvement, somehow the private sector would re-emerge as the engine of economic power, and that this would result in prosperity beyond our wildest dreams. That is absolute nonsense and poppycock.

We could look back in history at the so-called good old days when, in fact, it was the order of the day for the private sector to have the first and final say. The Government never got involved. In those days how did the private sector manage to build up its fortunes and manipulate the system? It did it by paying low wages, forcing people to work long hours, paying little if any benefits, not providing adequate health care systems, and forcing young children to work in factories and mines. That was a system which existed in the so-called good old days. That, I say to the House, is the system to which the Conservative Party of Canada would love to see the country return.

I find it most aggravating. I believe the Government does have a plan and knows what it is doing. I do not doubt for one minute that there are those on the back-benches and those on the Treasury benches of the Conservative administration who, not unlike their colleagues in many of the provinces—B.C. being an excellent example—would have absolutely no qualms about moving to longer hours of work for employees and getting youngsters to enter the workforce at an earlier age rather than seeing them become educated. There are those who would have no qualms about seeing cut-backs in health care provisions and cut-backs in education, and this at a time when the future lies in becoming better educated, not less educated.

I believe the Liberal Party has missed the boat in its criticism. It is absolutely correct in that those kinds of measures and levers are the right ones to use, but I believe it is wrong to suggest that the Government is not exercising the will of provincial Governments or the will of Parliament. I think the Government is exercising the will of the Tory administrations across the land and the Sacred Administration in British Columbia. I think it is exercising the will of the 211 Conservative Members who were elected in 1984. In fact, I believe those are the very people who determined, upon being elected, that they would undermine the social fabric of Canada and move toward adding more to that great pool of unemployed who would be able to fight with each other to get lower and lower wages simply to have a job. I would say to my colleagues in the Liberal Party, well intentioned though their motion is, that it may be misdirected.

I look at what this Government has done and its almost blind adherence to a system which never worked when it was