

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If the Hon. Minister has completed his comments, does he have a question?

Mr. Merrithew: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a question. I would like them to comment upon the unemployment figures. Have they read the Statistics Canada figures which were released on Friday, the figures indicating that unemployment was down in New Brunswick? Perhaps the Hon. Member for Egmont could respond to that.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I am going to answer him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Yes, that is fine. Just one moment, please. I have extended the time by a few minutes for the Hon. Member because of the Minister's comments. I would like to hear every Member from that particular area comment and ask questions, but there are only so many minutes allowed for each Hon. Member.

An Hon. Member: That would be fine, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Not at this moment.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to respond to those comments. I am glad that I was able to get the Minister to his feet, because we have not heard a thing from him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Henderson: As far as asking him a question is concerned, he is really only in charge of the forestry service. My gosh, he is a glorified bureaucrat with a chauffeur; that is all he is.

The Minister referred to the unemployment figures. He should read the latest statistics, which indicate that in New Brunswick unemployment is up and that in Prince Edward Island it is up by two percentage points. Does the Minister read what is going on? What about the CNR lay-offs in the Moncton ships? What is happening there? Is the Minister saying anything about that? His colleagues are trying to get something going. Why is he not fighting the battle for them? He is asleep at the wheel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period for questions and comments is now terminated. On debate, the Hon. Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. McInnes).

Mr. Henderson: While the Minister is running around cutting ribbons, I would like him to comment upon the frigate program in Saint John.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When we started the debate this morning, the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall) stood, and the Conservatives were asleep at the switch. The Hon. Member from Charlottetown was not on his feet; he was sitting on his fanny. I think the Chair should recognize someone in this Party—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The Hon. Member will be recognized following the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. McInnes).

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely delighted to enter into this debate.

Mr. Nunziata: It is about time.

Mr. McInnes: This is the first opportunity. I am also delighted to associate myself with the remarks of the Minister of State for Forestry (Mr. Merrithew). He is the first Minister responsible for forestry in the Government of Canada in 20 years in recognition of the fact that forestry is the number one industry and a major employer in Canada. I cannot understand where our friends opposite were when they were in a position to appoint a Minister responsible for forestry.

Mr. Merrithew: It was neglected.

Mr. McInnes: Yes, it was a resource which was neglected for far too long.

Mr. Tobin: He is a Minister of State who works for John Wise.

Mr. Dingwall: He is a phantom; he is here but he is not all there.

Mr. McInnes: Our Government is ensuring that this very valuable resource will receive the detailed attention which it deserves.

Mr. Nunziata: The lights are on but nobody is home.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. If there are questions and comments, Hon. Members can wait until after the Minister has finished.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In the interest of keeping the record straight—and we want to listen carefully to what the Minister is saying—would he please refer to the Minister by his proper title, which is Minister of State reporting to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise)?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not think that is a point of order, but go ahead.

Mr. McInnes: I must confess, at the outset, that I will not be able to shout as loudly as my friend from Cape Breton-East Richmond. However, I hope the quality of my remarks will testify to the attitude and performance of the Government of the last 14 years, relative to the motion before the House.

I am very pleased to note that the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall) has finally come out of the bottle. It is as though he has been encapsulated for the period of time he has been sitting in Parliament. Let the record show that he was a Parliamentary Secretary in the previous Government. I made inquiries as to the volume and effectiveness of any arguments which he advanced. Did he advance