that because of the mess the Liberals left the economy in, he has no other course of action.

One of the reasons we are in this economic mess today is that the previous Liberal government followed exactly the same policy. It followed the policy of continuing to raise interest rates. That slowed down the economy and caused more and more bankruptcies, unemployment and inflation for the ordinary consumer. I thought Canadians wanted to throw out the Liberals because of the economic mess they were creating. I thought Canadians believed the new Conservative government would change policy and swing things around. Most Canadians are now beginning to realize that the old adage is indeed true—Tory times are tough times.

• (1450)

Just since the election of a few months ago the bank interest rate has gone up to a record high. It is now 14 per cent, which means consumers and lenders are being charged somewhere around 16 per cent by the banks. "Who cares?" I quote the minister's words right back to him. It seems to me that what happened in the election of May 22 is that we just exchanged the black cats for the white cats. They are still cats. They are still wedded to the same economic philosophy which created the problems we have today and which will not get us out of the problems we are in today.

This minister is wedded to advice from the governor of the Bank of Canada, who is convinced that a policy of high interest rates and of foreign borrowing is the only way to proceed in terms of keeping the economy healthy. Where is the health in this economy? Canada, among western countries, has one of the highest unemployment rates, one of the highest interest rates, a very high inflation rate and an economy which has no over-all industrial strategy. We are wedded to the old concept of exporting our raw materials and, hence, exporting potential manufacturing jobs which could be created here in Canada.

It seems that there has been no change. There are new faces on that other side of the House, but they certainly do not have new policies. It is hypocritical of the present government and the present Minister of Finance to argue that they did not realize things were so bad when they were in opposition but now that they are in government they have discovered things are so bad that they have no choice but to proceed with the disastrous economic policies they were condemning only a year ago. That is not good enough. It will not fool the Canadian electorate. What was wrong when the Liberals were in power is just as wrong today. Economic circumstances have not changed. The factors the Liberal government was dealing with are the same factors this government is dealing with. Where are the dramatic changes which could make things different? I do not see them. Therefore, how can the government argue that it cannot strike out with new initiatives and new solutions to the problems it analysed only a year ago?

I think it is hypocrisy of the highest order to argue one thing when you are in the opposition and then when you are in government to reverse yourself because of political expediency and carry on the same policies you were railing against only 12 months ago. I think it points out the shallowness of the criticism the Conservatives made of the economic performance of the Liberals when the Conservatives were in opposition. One can only conclude that they really did not mean it when they said that a high interest rate policy was wrong and damaging to small business and consumers. I think they were only saying it because they wanted to say something different or look different from the Liberals when they were in government. Now, of course, the Conservatives are in government, and their true colours are showing.

[Mr. Symes.]

When we look at the amount of borrowing sought by the bill which is before us, we see that the Minister of Finance wants to be able to borrow $7 billion. Our criticism is that we do not know what he is going to do with it. What is he going to do with this $7 billion?

When he was leader of the opposition, the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) used that same kind of argument in criticizing the Liberals in the first place.

Mr. Crosbie: If you don't want to pass this bill, you tell us what you want cut. What part of the $7 billion do you want to cut out?

Mr. Symes: I hear the minister asking how he can avoid borrowing $7 billion from foreign markets or from wherever it is he has to borrow. Well, I ask him to look at the income tax system as it is presently structured. My latest calculations show that large corporations in this country owe the federal government $12 billion in deferred taxes, taxes which have not been collected by the previous Liberal government nor by this present Conservative government. He is saying he has no alternative, because federal revenues are down so much, but to go out and borrow $7 billion and, of course, pay a very high interest rate which we as taxpayers have to fund. The federal treasury lacks close to $12 billion in taxes which it has not collected from the corporations of this country. This was a deliberate policy.

It was argued that these tax concessions and deferred allowances had to be given to corporations in all sectors of the economy to encourage them to expand and hire Canadians in order to keep our unemployment rate down. It obviously has not worked. We have one of the highest unemployment rates in the industrialized world. Something went wrong, but this government would never think of collecting taxes which have been deferred indefinitely and which accountants indicate in annual reports of corporations are unlikely ever to be collected.

Never do we as individuals have a chance to defer our taxes. Come April 30, the Department of National Revenue wants those taxes; but for corporations the story is not the same. We as individual taxpayers have to bear the burden and make up revenue that this government and its predecessor have refused to collect from the corporate sector, in spite of record profits in certain sectors of the economy. I think the most dramatic recent examples are the profits of oil companies, which are at a record level. Those profits amount to incredible sums, yet their tax rates, depletion allowances and other factors are incredibly