

Private Members' Business

Traditionally, only 40 per cent of Canada's national income came from sectors recognized as competitive. In the United States, however, 80 per cent of the national income is estimated to come from such sectors. Mr. Speaker, in the last budget, this government clearly showed its commitments to prosperity and competitiveness. We firmly believe that lower prices are not only desirable for the competitiveness of Canadian industry but that they are also very important for consumers, who account for nearly 60 per cent of the final demand for goods and services in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned in the last Speech from the Throne, we will soon begin a vast round of consultations on prosperity and competitiveness. We hope that this round of consultations will help us identify certain weaknesses in the Canadian economy and obstacles to competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, Canadian businesses want to know what they must do to succeed and what policies of the federal government will best foster Canadian competitiveness.

I am very satisfied with this government's economic leadership. The hon. member's proposal shows a real concern for the welfare of Canadians. I invite him to cooperate with the government in implementing our prosperity initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the solution he wants on prices cannot be found in creating another Royal commission of inquiry or in government intervention but rather in a dynamic, productive and prosperous Canadian economy. That is the commitment we made to all Canadians in the Speech from the Throne and we will achieve it.

[English]

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to be back after a pleasant summer with constituents, but mostly with family.

I wanted to speak on this particular motion. Normally there is a gem of wisdom that I might be able to glean after a lot of scratching down on NDP motions.

I know the the hon. member's intentions are good, but I think he is being a little mischievous. He puts forward to the House a motion, which if it is ever adopted, if the

government ever did do it, would cost the taxpayers of this fair land millions and millions of dollars. Surely to goodness the one thing that we do not need in this country at this particular time is another Royal commission.

Royal commissions are a convenient way for legislators, no matter if they are here or somewhere else, to take an issue they do not believe they are capable of dealing with, or that they do not believe they want to deal with because of the political implications, and they put it over to a body so they do not have to discuss it for two, three, four or ten, or God knows how many years. They do this all the time. The Royal commission goes on its way and leads Canadians to believe that it is something other than a depository for people's opinions. They cannot do anything about it.

After two or three years of study, the Royal commission will table a report which gathers dust in too many libraries across Canada and most particularly, the Library of Parliament.

I have heard the New Democratic member opposite speak eloquently in this House about his party's grave concerns for the people of Canada. I am not doubting for a moment that this member has those concerns and I am sure they are deeply felt.

We are in a time when there is not a lot of money. We on the Liberal side believe that if we were in government, we would spend government money a little more wisely and that we would, perhaps, have a better social conscience. We believe in a free market system but we also believe that government has a responsibility through its institutions and through various regulatory mechanisms to ensure that Canadians, no matter where they live, can share in the greatness of the country.

I remember at one time the New Democratic Party in Nova Scotia used to be down on Cape Breton Island where I grew up, where we had great economic difficulty, a lot of hardships but they were very, very good people and we stuck together. The New Democratic Party would campaign and they would not only have one chicken in every pot if they got elected, they would have 10. They would go into an area where there was substandard housing and instead of being upfront with the people, they would say: "The day we get in, not only will you