

*Supply*

Bryce Royal Commission on mergers and acquisitions in the Canadian economy.

I see the Hon. Member opposite decrying all such mergers and acquisitions as if they were to be somehow prevented and deplored. I do not share that view. As I have said, they can bring very real benefit to our society as a whole if we have some large corporations capable of competing internally and marshalling the resources necessary to exploit our various talents and natural resources.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question. The motion implies that the New Democratic Party would like employment creation funds distributed on the basis of local employment levels. We have heard the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) on numerous occasions tell us that Canada Works funds are distributed to constituencies on the basis of an objective formula, one based on employment rates and unemployment rates in different ridings.

I have a difficulty, and I would like some comment from the Minister on it. I have certain knowledge that once every 10 years in a census we collect data. It tells us how many people are employed and how many people are unemployed in every riding and community in the country. However, in between those 10-year periods, nobody, no agency of government,—including Stats Canada, and Employment and Immigration—collects unemployment data or employment data on the basis of local communities or on the basis of ridings. The dilemma is how can we distribute funds on the basis of an objective formula when we do not have data anywhere in Canadian society which would enable us to do that, except once every 10 years? How can the Government think it is doing an objective job when the data base is simply not available?

**Mr. MacLaren:** Mr. Speaker, I believe one of my colleagues will be speaking to the broad question which the Hon. Member raised a moment ago. On the specific question of compilation of data, it had been my understanding that the Unemployment Insurance Commission as well as Statistics Canada does compile interim statistics between decennial censuses. If I can assist the Hon. Member in that regard, I would be pleased to provide him with some information. I will seek it and obtain it for him.

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, it will probably come as a bit of a surprise to our friends in the New Democratic Party if I tell them at the outset that, although we have some slight difficulty with the wording of the motion put by the NDP and although we feel it requires a little fine tuning, we intend to support it.

In an effort to provide that fine tuning and in an effort to make the motion more precise, to eliminate some of the obfuscation, ambiguity and uncertainty of the motion, we intend, and I do so now before the clock overtakes me, to move an amendment. I hope this amendment will lend itself to the NDP because I think it strengthens and substantially improves the motion as well as addresses some of the concerns raised during the course of the debate.

I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes):

That the motion be amended by deleting the period after the words "levels" and adding the following thereafter: "instead of focusing on job creation programs open to all eligible Canadians, such as career access and refundable employment tax credits".

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault):** If the Hon. Member will continue debate, the Chair will consider the amendment and reserve a decision on it.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make sure, given the limited amount of time we have in these debates, that I would not be overtaken by the clock before I had an opportunity to move my amendment. I am sure you will find it in order.

It is rather interesting that the very substance of my amendment was addressed in an intervention by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Evans), who in a previous incarnation suffered under the terrible strain of being Parliamentary Secretary to the former Minister of Finance. Although we did not always agree with the Member, we had great admiration for the way he went across the country trying to defend the indefensible.

He put forward this question in his intervention. Why are jobs not being created in the private sector? That is precisely the nature of the amendment that we have put forward. We believe that, through the mechanism of a refundable employment tax credit, we can focus on the specific problems within the work force.

For example, a refundable employment tax credit has the ability of being able to focus on youth unemployment, which is a serious problem. We have over 500,000 young people unemployed in Canada today. That rate of unemployment among young people is static. It has remained so for the past 15 or 16 months, representing as it does some 20 per cent of the work force. A refundable tax credit would have the advantage of being able to focus on youth unemployment in a direct way and provide permanent—and I underline the word permanent—meaningful, jobs within the private sector.

There is one area on which I agree with the Minister. It is this. He said in reply to a member of the New Democratic Party that small business is the biggest generator of jobs in our economy. We in the Conservative Party support that thesis and are prepared to back it up. That is why we have put forward this policy.

It is important to understand why it is necessary to bring in a refundable employment tax credit. I was rather surprised to hear the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. MacLaren) talk about economic recovery. I suppose we will hear more about that in the Budget tomorrow when we hear the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) talk about economic recovery. But the Minister of State for Finance seemed to get carried away. In the euphoria he has created around this area of economic recovery, he talked about an improvement in the unemployment situation.