

Bank of Canada Act

● (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the hon. member whether he has noticed a very rapid drop in interest rates in the last few weeks or whether he is still thinking about the situation as it was some months ago?

Mr. Nasserden: Even today, in the House of Commons, one of the minister's colleagues in answer to a question intimated that the increase in the cost of C.M.H.C. loans brought about by the government was something to brag about. It is an indication of the attitude taken by hon. members opposite as they try to come to grips with the problems which face the economy today. I hesitate to believe that ministers opposite are so ignorant as to fail to realize the impact their policies have had upon our economy and upon the future prospects of this nation.

Incidentally, I hope the minister is not taking this too hard, but I see he has left the chamber. I thought he could take it better than that. But there are other ministers present and I say to them that Canadians will have to pay a colossal price for this carelessness. Future generations will pay and pay and pay because of the failure of the government to follow sound economic policies suitable for this day and age. This government, led by the Prime Minister, has set in motion a sinister, creeping phenomenon which could be described as a disease capable of weakening and eventually paralysing productivity in this nation. It might even threaten the identity of Canada itself.

Our industrial potential cannot help but be retarded and a large part of the Canadian heritage is bound to be lost for future generations. The government made decisions. The government set out on a deliberate course designed to bring about rising interest rates. It succeeded in those efforts. Despite what the Minister of Finance said a few moments ago, interest rates were never higher than they are today. The government opposite ignored the warnings of the opposition. It ignored warnings from its own ranks. It created a crisis with regard to housing in this country.

I say the blame for all this rests upon the shoulders of hon. gentlemen opposite. It is they who are responsible for the tight money situation which has bedevilled the housing picture from one end of Canada to the other. The Minister of Finance does not like to hear these things. I was about to say that he had left the chamber while I was discussing them in order to show his contempt.

to strengthen the hand of the federal government and its control over monetary policy within the nation. The result was to provide parliament with a new weapon to influence financial and economic conditions. That government, led by Calgary's most noted son, wanted to preserve the heritage and resources of Canada for Canadians. It wanted to make sure that the future of this country would not be left to chance or whim.

I recall the origin of that legislation. I recall how it was labelled by some as so much nonsense and heresy. That image has now largely faded, but today we are faced with a Prime Minister and a government which, by their actions during their term of office and by the deeds they have committed, have placed this nation in the economic jungle of an entirely new era.

One need only consider for a moment the economic conditions prevailing with the nation today to realize the ground that has been lost under the present administration led by the Prime Minister. One might well ask the question: Where has he led us? The answer to that question is written in privation, hardship and opportunity denied. Indeed, the monetary, fiscal and taxation policies of this government have led to the greatest period of labour unrest that this nation has ever witnessed. The result of these policies has been evidenced as well by the steadily increasing cost of production and the lack of that productivity which is essential to the welfare of all our people. Not only that, sir, but there has been increase after increase in the cost of living, increases taking place consecutively from month to month and year to year. Canadians now have the highest cost of living in the entire history of the nation. All Canadians have had to pay a fearful price because of the role played by this government. In addition, taxes have increased beyond anything visualized even a few years ago.

Why have these things occurred if not as a result of the callous, careless abandonment of sound economic policies on the part of the Prime Minister and his ministers opposite, who like to plead innocent? But events from day to day tell a different story. We have tight money in this country today, the highest interest rates in our history and the highest cost of living. The Minister of Finance smiles when these things are mentioned as though they do not work hardship on the people of this country.