

But from 1984 until now this government has been unable to understand anything else except the short-term, bottom line approach which has led to a failure to do those things in our economy.

I mean yes, indeed, it was some measure of expenditures to ensure that our people and our industries were in fact ready to compete. Because there is no better way of eliminating a deficit than by putting people to work so they are not on unemployment insurance, so they are not collecting social assistance, but this government could not understand that simple thing. If we are going to have a competitive economy that makes profits, pays taxes and eliminates the deficit over the long term, investments had better be made in the short term so that can be accomplished in the future. This government failed to do that.

Not only that, as if it were not bad enough, before free trade it was stupid enough not to have made those structural changes in the economy by appropriate initiatives.

It then goes to work and introduces a free trade agreement which was supposed to be its industrial strategy. Let us just think of the consequences of entering into that agreement without having made those structural competitive changes that were necessary.

There were 400,000 manufacturing jobs lost, 1,000 jobs lost per day. The government would say that perhaps it is a temporary loss due to the recession. For comparison, four times as many plants have closed permanently in Canada as have closed in the United States. The difference we can attribute to free trade.

If we are going to talk about the deficit, let us talk about the impact on our economy of one single element coming out of the free trade agreement. That is the dollar that went from 72 cents to over 85 cents and killed the competitiveness of major industries in this country.

Mr. Turner (Halton—Peel): It had nothing to do with free trade, Howard.

Mr. McCurdy: Oh, my God. He said it has nothing to do with free trade. It has nothing to do with free trade.

In document after document from the American side, from the Senate and the Congress, from the mouths of their negotiators was the clear statement that this thing was not going to work except with an 85-cent Canadian dollar.

Government Orders

That is exactly what we have. Whether you know it or not, that is what happened, and that has been a more significant contributor to the deficit, a more significant contributor to unemployment, a more significant contributor to the need out there for social assistance and unemployment than anything else.

Now we are told that the government has not decreased transfer payments. Let me read it to you: "In 1985-86, the share of federal revenue and federal cash transfers was 26 per cent." It is now 16 per cent. I do not know. It looks like that goes downhill to me, and I think that will be read as a decrease in the proportion of money being transferred to the provinces.

Now, you might be able to kid some of the people some of the time, you may even be able to kid yourselves a good deal of the time, but I promise you, you will not fool the Canadian people.

We have people hurting all over the place. I am not here to defend the NDP Government of Ontario or the NDP Government of Saskatchewan or the NDP Government of British Columbia. I am here to speak for the Canadian people who want this government out.

Canadians know now that they cannot get unemployment insurance for as long as they did before, and they have to work longer to get it in a climate where this government has wiped out their jobs for them.

Here in Ottawa right now, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is telling the government that in all the municipalities because of this government's cutback in transfers under the Canada Assistance Plan their welfare rolls have gone up and the burden on the municipal taxpayer has gone up.

Government members tell us that this is a good deal in the interests of Canadian unity. There has not been a single factor more damaging to Canadian unity than the existence of this government since 1984. If we are going to have Canadian unity, we had better get another government.

Canadians are expected to be concerned about the Constitution. By God, I am because I do not want to see this country destroyed. Those of us who fear its destruction will understand its source. It will come from the incompetence, the lack of foresight and the greedy orientation represented by this government. That will kill this country.