

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I think the parliamentary secretary makes a very valid point. I did hear the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) use the expression "deliberately misleading the House," and I think it would be very parliamentary and honourable if the hon. member were to withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I did say "deliberately misleading". I admit that, and I would be very glad to withdraw that and agree that the minister was not deliberately misleading. He was misleading out of ignorance or stupidity or for some other reason.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson: With regard to the other matter to which the minister referred about which he was misleading and incorrect, he said that the economic development conference we were going to be having was to be held some time this fall. He knows perfectly well that it would have been held in the early winter of this year. What we have seen happen as a result of this government's taking office is a loss in time which has amounted to billions and billions of dollars lost in economic development activity through a continuing deferral of a comprehensive energy policy which we had introduced and on which we were very close to having total agreement between all the provinces of the country. All we have seen over the past four or five months is continuing argument and disagreement between the different levels of government, with the result that everybody in this country suffers, and to me that is one of the most damaging elements of any industrial strategy or lack of strategy.

Finally, let me quote from "How Ottawa Decides" by Richard D. French who, I understand, used to be an official in the Privy Council office in the Trudeau government. Let me quote from page 145 as follows:

The Clark reforms represented a coherent attempt to resolve certain persistent flaws in the central decision-making process. The arrival of the new government, headed by a Prime Minister with the courage to innovate despite a precarious political situation, created a window through which a breath of fresh air ventilated the corridors of power. Significant features of the Clark reforms appear likely to be retained by the new Trudeau administration which arrived in February, 1980.

I am glad the minister has seen fit to accept many of the innovations brought in by the Clark government. I wish he had the courage and the good manners to give credit where credit is due.

Let me move from here to make a contribution to this debate in what I would regard as a non-partisan manner, in such a way as to bring forward some proper thinking in what I think we all agree is a very important area for the future of this country.

We are moving into some very difficult times in the 1980s. There are some great economic opportunities in the long run but, unfortunately, in the short run we have some very real problems and we have to face up to those today. We have heard from my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre), about previous attempts at trying to reach some

form of economic development strategy, and I would like to discuss some areas in which I feel this government should be moving today.

I think it is important that the government put its ideas down on paper because we have seen a clear change in direction from previous Liberal administrations. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has said that his government will ensure that the federal government is an active player in industrial development rather than just a passive referee. He has also said that the government will be in active participation when the public interest requires it. The minister himself has indicated a clear direction toward economic nationalism in this country. What we do not know is how the government is going to achieve this, and for that reason it is critical that this be put on paper so that the people in the country understand which way this government is intending them to go.

Harking back to the end of 1975, the Prime Minister indicated very clearly the direction in which he wished to take this country. He said that we were going to have more government and that we had to get used to bigger government in our lives. What concerns me today is that this government is trying to sneak in this policy without proper debate, and I look forward to participating, hopefully this fall, in a debate in this area. Because I do not think it is right for the government to bring in ad hoc decisions such as the Chrysler bail-out, the extension of the shipbuilding subsidies, the extension of shoe import quotas and changes to the Foreign Investment Review Act, without our having an opportunity to discuss the total strategy which the government is proposing to follow.

From time to time during the earlier months of this Parliament I tried to elicit from the minister some of the ground rules and yardsticks by which he was going to be making decisions relating to the bail-out of sick companies or assistance to dying industries. To date the only basis on which I can see the Chrysler decision was made was that it was big and involved many jobs.

Miss MacDonald: And it was in Windsor.

Mr. Wilson: My hon. friend says that it was in Windsor, and that is probably the most important basis. I can understand if jobs are involved, but there was very little else in the minister's statement to indicate the basis on which these decisions are to be made. If this government is going to become more and more involved with poking its finger into the workings of the economy, we must know the basis upon which the decisions are going to be made. Any proposal or request for help from the government will be very hard to turn down based on the merits of that particular proposal itself because there will be jobs at stake and there will be communities affected. What we need to have are some ground rules as to how we take those sick companies from the state they are in today at the time the proposals are made to a point where they can make a positive contribution to economic development in this country.

I would like to talk briefly about the proposals regarding the Foreign Investment Review Agency. The Clark government