

Supply

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, from that answer, it is obvious that the Hon. Member does not know which side of the fence he is on. All the debate in the world will not extract a decision from Members if they cannot answer questions.

I have three short questions. The Hon. Member implied that it is not only the blame of the Government, but that we are all to blame. Does that suggest that he denies the responsibility to provide leadership, or does he believe that this Government has been providing the leadership required by this country? Second, he placed great emphasis on the deindexing initiatives of the Bills presently before the House as if this were the Government's most important initiative for coming to grips with our serious economic crisis. Does he believe that the most important initiatives which merely reduce the incomes of all Canadians equally will solve the structural problems and attitudinal problems in our society?

Since he dwelled on productivity and the deficiency of a compensation system, I would like a specific answer as to what particular legislative steps and consultative steps the Government has taken to overcome that problem. Does he feel that the Government is taking those initiatives which he would advocate? Let us hear some real answers for a change.

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the six and five initiatives, I think it is extremely important. I would say to the Hon. Member that that program has formed the basis for the establishment of a national consensus on the need for Government action as well as some agreement on the nature of that need. I am not saying that it is a be-all and end-all but it has allowed us to establish some form of national consensus upon which we can build in the future. We have to expand on that national consensus, which is the very theme the Hon. Member for Rosedale was trying to build upon in his initial comments. I think the Hon. Member would agree that the beginning of a national consensus was formed around that six and five program. I think it has to be nourished further, and I hope he would have some comment on that.

I told the Hon. Member my position with regard to the question of universality. At this time I am in favour of universality because of the negative aspects of selectivity. I am not saying that this is the route the country will have to take in the final analysis. That debate certainly must be entered into. I do not believe that I am copping out at all. At this time I favour universality.

The last question asked by the Hon. Member concerned productivity and compensation. I would suggest to him that this issue, which was raised in questions I asked during my speech, has not been raised in the House before. I am in the process of raising those issues with my colleagues on this side at the present time. Today, I have raised those issues with my colleagues on the other side of the House. Therefore, the Government has obviously not introduced policies to deal with them. That is not to say that I am the only one who has contemplated these issues. However, I have not heard debate on them before. I welcome the Hon. Member's contribution to that debate, should he decide to contribute.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's constituency includes Parliament Hill. I wish that we had a Member for Parliament Hill in particular, namely, the Speaker, due to the manner in which employees are treated here, with lay-offs and the type of salaries they receive.

When the Hon. Member talked about indexing—which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) bragged about instituting because of its protection for those who cannot defend themselves against the ravages of inflation—he complained that it installed a structural rigidity. We now have 6 per cent and 5 per cent limits on pensions of Public Service and Crown corporation wages and salaries.

Would the Hon. Member tell us his view on implementing 6 per cent and 5 per cent on professional fees such as those of doctors, lawyers and chartered accountants? Is he prepared to say that under the next budget, 100 per cent of any increase in income over 6 per cent will get taxed back? Is he also prepared to say that management fees, management perks and consultant fees will also get taxed back 100 per cent for anything over 6 per cent?

Since he wants to do away with this structural rigidity, will he say that dividends, what he calls the owners of the private sector, will be held to 6 per cent and 5 per cent and the surplus profits will be reinvested into the economy?

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Hon. Member knows as well as I do that questions dealing with prices are not something that this Government can bring down in a budget.

Mr. Benjamin: I never used the word "prices".

Mr. Evans: The prices charged by doctors and lawyers. Those are outside of this Government's jurisdiction as he knows from the AIB period. It was done with the consent of the provincial Governments. We have been told quite clearly that the provincial Governments will not support any form of mandatory wage and price controls. Quite frankly, I do not support mandatory wage and price controls. I do not believe that they work. It is just another rigidity built into the system which is compounded on top of other rigid programs.

When we were talking a moment ago about the necessity to consider how we determine who takes what out of the system, I was not only talking about the workers. I talked about the managers and the owners, and I suggest that if you review what I said, Mr. Speaker, you will find that I was equally concerned about both sides, labour and management and capital and labour. We have to find a better way to split the rewards since it is not being done well at this time. That was the theme I was trying to make.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Hon. Member a question. He stated that the country had to make some hard choices. There has been an implicit criticism of the Government in terms of a myriad of policies on which the Government has not made tough choices.

The Science Council of Canada in its report entitled "Threshold Firms: Backing Canada's Winners" said that