

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—THE ECONOMY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Bevilacqua.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to participate in the debate today, although I must say that when I read the motion put forward by my hon. friend I cannot help but wonder what world he is living in.

It ignores the facts at home and it ignores the facts abroad. It takes what I guess Canadians are coming to see as a typical Liberal approach to policy. There is no substance. They chase the polls, pretend to be in favour of whatever seems to be popular, are against absolutely everything and criticize every initiative taken by anyone else.

Consider this business of pretending that we are still mired in a recession when clearly we are starting to come out of it. There is no question that we have been through a tough recession. The whole world has been through it but things are turning around and Canada is well postured to come out of it.

Furthermore, I might say that it is interesting to note our recovery is export driven by the trade policies put in place by this government, every single one of which the Liberal Party opposed. Is that not interesting?

We hear them talk about all the terrible things going on. Let us check the record. Let us look at what is going on in the country today. The unemployment rate dropped in February from January. The help wanted index rose by four points in February. The composite leading indicator was up 0.7 per cent. That is a huge jump and a good sign of robust growth over the next few months. They scoff on the other side but these are the facts. We have to deal with the facts as they are, not as they wish were.

Housing starts in February jumped 6 per cent over that in January. Exports in January 1993 set another record. We sold \$14.6 billion of goods and services to the world,

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which is more than we sold previously in the history of this country.

In 1992 exports set an all-time high and were up 11.2 per cent from 1991. The inflation rate in February 1993 was only 2.3 per cent. That is not bad when we compare it with a 12.9 per cent inflation rate that the Liberals left us when they left power.

Our workers are more productive. Statistics Canada reports said that labour productivity has had its best rate in almost 10 years. In 1992 output per person was up 2.3 per cent. We are coming out of this recession. We are well postured and we are well positioned to deal with the changes going on in the world.

• (1520)

Why? It is simply because the government has had the foresight and the courage to put things in place. The world is changing whether my hon. friends opposite want to know it or not. In fact one of our colleagues here, the hon. member for Halton—Peel, has recently published a very excellent book. I want to give him a plug. He looks ahead and talks about some of the things that are going to happen in the future. I would recommend this book to all my colleagues for their reading.

Here are a few of the principles that he sees as he looks ahead: a lot more globalization, success to those who are competitive, competitive pressures to reduce taxes and lessen regulations, more efficient government, pressure to control government spending, more economic restructuring, changing demographics, and it goes on.

Whether my hon. friends opposite want to acknowledge it or not, the world is changing and Canada must change to align itself with the changes in the world so that Canadians will be able to benefit and have a level of prosperity such as they never experienced before as we head into the 21st century.

That is precisely what underwrites the economic plan of this government set forth in November 1984 when it first came into office.

It is interesting to reflect on that performance over the last eight and a half years. There has been a five-part program. These are not *ad hoc* random happenings that have gone on. There is a clear structure and a plan to prepare Canada to be competitive in the 21st century. It has included a program of deficit control. Interestingly enough, every deficit control measure that has been