

Supply

single sector. The Minister pooh-poohs what the Conference Board of Canada has reported this week, that Alberta will have the worse performing provincial economy in Canada. Growth will be down for the second consecutive year, last year by .7 per cent and this year that is expected to almost double to a free fall of 1.1 per cent. The oil and gas sector has lost 25,000 direct and 25,000 indirect jobs in the last 12 months.

● (1250)

The Minister can go around Alberta and crow, saying this is marvellous, 50,000 jobs have disappeared, it is the bread and butter workers, the roughnecks, the people constructing pipelines and providing various kinds of technology to the oil patch, who know they are not taking home a pay cheque. They know they have the silent 20 here in Ottawa who are not addressing the problem on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Where is this famous western initiative fund? Where are all these famous proposals by these supposedly great Albertans who are standing up against the socialist hordes? The Conservative Government has the largest majority in Canadian history and it is unable to do anything in the west. It has no interest. Its only interest is in continuing to be re-elected.

Let us take another look at the oil patch. While upstream exploration and development revenues fell by 64 per cent in 1986 compared to 1985, revenues from the refining operations of the major integrated oil companies increased 110 per cent. The top five were all in the 90 per cent to 110 per cent range, with Texaco leading the way. At the same time the small Canadian-owned oil and gas companies that do most of the exploration were squeezed, in many cases squeezed out.

For decades Conservative MPs have returned to Ottawa time after time after time saying, "Give us a chance. When we are in Government we are going to do X, Z, and Y". I talk to Albertans all the time. I go to weddings and all kinds of things there. Most of my family still lives in Alberta. I am proud to say I was born an Albertan. As you probably know, I was born in Canmore, a small coal mining town just outside Banff, and many of my relatives still live there. I know what those people are saying.

In 1986 compared to 1985 the money spent on takeovers and acquisitions in the oil and gas industry rose by 60 per cent, from \$2.2 billion to \$3.5 billion. We know what is happening with respect to the Conservative investment policy. They love to sell out to the lowest bidder. If the Americans want to buy, come on in and buy all you want. Let the minnows take over the whales, let the whales take over the minnows. It is not creating any new jobs and in the future Canadians will reflect on this massive majority Conservative Government elected on September 4, 1984, and massively crushed in 1988, particularly in Alberta. Albertans are not fooled by the bombast of Ministers like the one who just spoke. Not anymore. You can drag all this socialist rhetoric out but Albertans drive to Saskatchewan. They know what Tommy Douglas and Allan Blakeney did. They know what good was done in British Columbia during the days of Dave Barrett.

Mr. Malone: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fulton: They know and put trust in what Ed Broadbent has to say. They know he has some vision of the west and how the country can really work. They know why medicare is good.

How many Conservatives in this House or in Alberta go out and tear up their medicare cards? We have the great socialist scare. All the Tories were saying this is terrible, the doctors will all leave and we will not be able to get our toe-nails clipped. Everything is going to collapse. B.C. brings in an insurance corporation and Alberta Tories say this is the end, free enterprise is finished. People who were buying car insurance, though, said this is not bad. Their insurance went from \$800 a year to \$400. They said these New Democrats seem to know what they are talking about. They are able to get insurance prices down and we like that. It is great to have free enterprisers running around saying you have to have free enterprise and pay twice as much for your car insurance or your fire insurance. Ordinary working Canadians are not fooled by that kind of claptrap and nonsense anymore.

Let us take a look at the farm economy. My colleague from Humboldt—Lake Centre has pointed out many times realistic ways of assisting farmers. We know about the U.S. Farm Bill. We know about the battles with the EEC. We know how you buy four bushels of wheat from them and you get one free. We know it is a serious problem for our farmers but we come forward with realistic solutions.

When it came to planting time we asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), the Minister of State for the Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer) and the Prime Minister whether they were prepared to give some kind of basic understanding to our farmers so that there would be some kind of additional funding at the end of this year. Do the Tories respond? No, they talk about the money given for the last crop year. They never want to deal with the real concerns of farmers.

Let us look at what has happened to farmland in Alberta. The average land value has fallen 50 per cent over the last five years. What does that mean to a farmer trying to get a loan to buy new equipment or fertilizer, trying to decide what to plant and where to plant, what to leave fallow? It does not help them. Albertan farmers had \$5 billion in loans outstanding at the end of last year, 23 per cent of Canada's outstanding farm debt. In 1986, 800 farm families had to abandon their farms. In 1983 the figure was only 300. The Minister gets up and says, "We great Conservatives have brought down interest rates and we should take all the credit for that". We know our interest rates are a reflection of the international market, particularly the U.S. If the Government wants to take credit for falling interest rates, then it has to take some responsibility for the international market for grain. You cannot just say that is the international market-place. They say they will take credit for the good things but when it is bad, no, no, that is the NDP or the U.S. or the world, or because the moon rose on the wrong side of the earth.