

Economic Development

if we are not careful, this economic development policy, through inactivity, unco-operative other levels of government and indifference of Canadians, will not be successful.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I know now that I am on the right track because the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is applauding.

Mr. Knowles: It is the red face.

Mr. Deans: It is the red face, is it? I have listened intermittently to the debate this afternoon and this evening. If one looks at the motion one cannot help but think how unfortunate it is that the vehicle which we use in order to discuss what Canada's future is likely to be is an opposition motion, before we get around to talking about the economic development which most of us would like to see, the way in which that economic development might be brought about, and the kind of benefits we would hope to derive on behalf of the people of Canada in the short term and the long term.

What we should be talking about and we have been talking about in part is the basic criteria which must be put in place in order to offset the problems which have arisen as the result of the attitude which has become evident through the succession of Liberal and Conservative governments over the last 20 years. It is time to say quite bluntly that we need no more tinkering with the economy, that it is time for us to look at the fundamental aspects of Canada's economy, to make some decisions about what we hope to achieve and how we intend to achieve those hopes.

There have been many changes over the past few years. I have listened particularly to government supporters enumerating the very many government measures which have been introduced. I am prepared to concede that some of these measures have resulted in a degree of success which makes them worth while. However, I think it is fair to say that if one were to judge the state of economy today as it affects the average individual, one would come to the conclusion that Canada's economy in 1980 is not as strong as Canada's economy was in 1970, and that in 1970 it was weaker than it was in 1960.

On balance, we have lost control, if we ever had control, and we have failed to put in place the long-term control mechanisms which are required if we are to derive the maximum benefits.

● (2100)

Why would we worry about the economy? Why not just let it take its course? Why bother? I think, to begin with, the reason is that we have the responsibility here in the House of Commons to put in place the policy measures which will bring about the long-term best results for the majority of Canadians. The economy is made up, I suppose in essence, of labour and capital. Labour does not really understand capital very well. Capital fails to understand the needs and the ambition of labour.

One of the primary cornerstones of any discussion, particularly any discussion about the future of the country, is that we have to set as a principal objective that all of the planning must include an understanding of the kind of community that we want. We want jobs. We want jobs that are safe and secure and reasonably well paid, rewarding both financially and personally.

From the point of view of capital we come to the conclusion—from what has been happening and in reading the financial pages of the many journals that are published, and many in the House of Commons see capital as an end in itself—that the making of money is in itself a worth-while endeavour.

As a nation and as a House of Commons I think we have to look at capital as a resource not unlike gold, oil or wheat. Capital is a means to serve a community's interest. The flow of capital is seen, therefore, like the flow of other raw materials. When we export capital, as we do in large amounts year after year, as opposed to exporting finished goods, we are exporting jobs. As we look at capital in all of its grandeur we have to recognize that it is only when it is put to use in Canada, to develop Canada for Canadians, that it serves a useful purpose.

It is a bit mind-boggling, as one who is not a financial expert, to read in the local papers day after day at times when plants are closing, when people are being laid off, when mortgage foreclosing is taking place and when small business is suffering considerably at the hands of large capital, that the major corporate sector is making more profit today than it ever has in its history. Why is this happening? What is it about the imbalance that has developed in our country? Why does this happen at a time when everyone is feeling the pinch and people are unable to find employment, for instance, the young people who cannot find employment, people who are laid off, where whole communities are down—Windsor is a good example of this—but there are many others all across the country? Why is it that as you read that on one page, you then turn over and read that the third quarter, the second quarter or the first quarter profit margins in industry after industry, sector after sector, are higher than ever before? We should ask ourselves the question are we using the capital generated in a way that will be beneficial for my children, your children, your grandchildren—children that we do not even know—who are going to have to live in a country that we leave for them?

As we begin to look at the economy and the development of Canada, we have to decide that all of the good intentions in the world will not change it. All of the wishing in the world will not change it either. A bit of tinkering by the government from time to time will prove beneficial in a marginal way, but in the long run it will not prove to be of any benefit.

We should approach a revitalization of the economy on a sectoral basis. For the purposes of my argument I have identified nine sectors that should be looked at. We must take a serious look at the depletable non-renewable natural resource sector. We must take a look at what I call, for the want of a better term, the accommodation sector. That includes commercial, industrial and private accommodation. We must take