

on the constituency of the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis), I suspect it is about the only positive thing it has done in the past three and a half years. I think the Hon. Member's question as he expressed it is confused. He began talking about the level of debt and its implications. By the end of the question he was not talking about the size of expenditure but whether the expenditure had been efficiently and effectively made. Those are two separate questions.

To answer the first question, I have to return to answers I have already given. One has to look at the size of the debt in terms of the economic cycle and the assets it helps create. Opposition Members in the House urge us day in and day out to undertake more and more expenditures for projects which they think are valuable and useful, given the economic situation which we confront. It is easy for them to disclaim the over-all impact of what they suggest and forget that it is the accumulation of all of the individual programs they would bring forward that would lead to such a debt.

In terms of the proper expenditure of the funds the Hon. Member described, the simplest way to focus on that question would be to ask him if it would have been right for the federal Government to withdraw its support of the aerospace industry in this country. His Government made that mistake back in the 1950s in terms of the Avro Arrow and we are still suffering from it.

If he was asking for my personal opinion, I would say that it is important that the federal Government support the aerospace industry. When you do that, some things go well and some do not go well. Yesterday we saw the shuttle flying into Ottawa. There was great enthusiasm. I think Members on the other side of the House would suggest that it was beneficial for Canada to support the development of Canadarm. That was a gamble we took which succeeded tremendously.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. The time provided for questions has expired.

Before proceeding to another Hon. Member, the Chair would like to remind Hon. Members of Standing Order 15(3), which states:

When a Member is speaking, no Member shall pass between that Member and the Chair—

In the course of the Minister's speech, an Hon. Member did cross the floor between the Hon. Minister and the Chair. The Chair would hesitate to stop a Member dead in his tracks for fear of the consequences, but I would be very happy if Hon. Members would co-operate and respect that basic rule of debate.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, today we witness another spectacle and more evidence that the Canadian conservative tradition in the Conservative Party of Canada is philosophically disintegrating before our very eyes.

An Hon. Member: Give us the 16 per cent solution.

Mr. Blaikie: Actually, I was just about to come to that. An Hon. Member says to give the 16 per cent solution, referring,

Supply

of course, to the latest Gallup poll and the indication that my Party only has 16 per cent support in the polls.

I was going to come to that topic because the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) was arguing the validity of Conservative policies by citing the support that those policies appear to be receiving in the Gallup poll. I cite that as evidence of what I previously referred to as the philosophical disintegration of the Conservative Party.

I am sure that Edmond Burke is rolling over in his grave after hearing Conservatives citing polls as evidence for the validity of their policies. Edmund Burke was that great Tory and defender of parliamentary government who said that he owed his constituents his best judgment and the exercise of his conscience. Although he would not have been able to say it this way at the time, he would have argued that he was not there simply to cater to the latest survey or opinion poll. Yet I believe that is where the Conservative Party has arrived via the long route that has seen the gradual Americanization of Canadian Conservatism.

I think it is a tragedy for Canadian politics and a tragedy for the political context in which debates take place in Canada to see a Party trying to take advantage of legitimate anti-Government feeling on the part of Canadians instead of attempting to help Canadians and others understand, through intelligent debate and reasonable argument, what is happening, in what ways their anti-Government feelings are legitimate and what other factors may be involved that cannot be blamed on Government alone.

The Conservatives make no attempt to help Canadians understand. Instead, we see them trying to ride out this anti-Government phenomenon felt by Canadians to victory. Perhaps they do not understand themselves. The Hon. Member for Vegreville said that his motion put clearly and succinctly what was happening. Surely he could not have meant that. Surely a motion which purports to be an analysis of what is happening to the Canadian economy and society but lays the blame for everything at the door of one particular sector in our society cannot be called clear or succinct.

For instance, there is no mention made of the environmental dimensions to the economic problems we are now facing. There is no mention made of errors and omissions of policies in the private sector of the country. There is no mention made of the global conditions in which the Canadian economy must develop. There is no mention of the North-South dialogue. In other words, there is no attempt to be intellectually honest with themselves or with the Canadian people in describing what is going on.

I say this without defending the Government in any way. I simply ask that the Conservatives make their analysis with intellectual honesty. I too have lots to say in criticism of the Government and many of its policies, but we serve no useful purpose in the House when we try to pretend that the issues are as simple as this motion would have us think they are.

Another reason why the motion and the speech made by the Hon. Member for Vegreville are not intellectually honest or