

have the most promise for growth. Yet the NDP has no idea of or no proposals for how that might best be done. They speak only about redistribution of income and do not offer one constructive suggestion about how we should encourage investment in Canada.

Professor Laxer, himself an NDP member presumably, said that if Canadian-owned manufacturing companies were offered a choice between a high corporate tax if profits are not usefully reinvested and a lower one if useful investments are made—that is to say, tax incentives, or tax loopholes, or tax hand-outs, as the Hon. Member opposite says—they will make the second choice.

Professor Laxer proceeded to give his advice to the NDP and I would join him in offering this advice—

Mr. Sargeant: Liberal advice.

Mr. MacLaren: —to that Party which seems to be in such a state of mental sterility these days. Professor Laxer urges that companies should be given corporate tax points off, that is to say, tax incentives, if they purchase Canadian machinery, carry out research and development, deploy new and more productive techniques, train workers for skilled jobs and encourage advancement for women.

Mr. Kristiansen: The word is “if”.

Mr. MacLaren: Those are all things our present system of tax incentives provide in this country.

Mr. Kristiansen: They are awash with tax give-aways.

Mr. MacLaren: For the Hon. Member opposite to say that tax incentives are somehow a dreadful and evil practice overlooks this whole issue. It is typical of the state of his Party today. As Professor Laxer says, it stands on the sidelines as far as this great debate about the future is concerned. He said it is time for the Party to face the future and enter the debate.

Since the Hon. Member has a contribution to make, I would urge him to address the real questions in our economy. Instead of being preoccupied, as he always seems to be, with the question of distribution rather than production, let him tell us if he has some answers for what he thinks should be done about the adaptation of the resource industry in Canada, our forest industry and our mineral industry, to new technologies, to new markets and to new competition.

Mr. Riis: You take the money and put it into Liberal ridings.

Mr. MacLaren: Why does his Party not address the central question in our economy and in our society, which is the adaptation of our work force to high technology?

Mr. Fulton: You are in government. You do not have a policy.

Mr. MacLaren: Why does the Member opposite not speak about training? Does he have anything to say about training of people in our economy?

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Mr. Fulton: Let us hear your policies.

Mr. MacLaren: Most of all, we are doing all those things—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order. May I suggest to Members on my far left that they will have the opportunity for questions or comments in a few minutes. They might try to maintain some order while the Minister is speaking.

Mr. MacLaren: We, in the Government, on this side of the House, are doing something else. We are recognizing the fact that the future growth in the Canadian economy depends directly on our international competitiveness. Our ability to produce goods and services more efficiently is a real answer to our future prosperity. For that reason we have put in place methods to consult and co-operate with business, labour and government in novel and exciting ways which we think are the real answers to the questions that the Member attempted to raise this morning but utterly failed to address.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister about precisely the point on which he attempted to criticize our Party. We have never said that unemployment can be greatly alleviated simply by increasing consumption. What we said about tax incentives and how corporations are taxed is that blunderbuss give-aways do not actually improve productivity.

People of Canada are told every day by government and industry that we must improve productivity to get jobs. Let me give the Minister some specific examples of what happens. Bell Canada recently spent hundreds of millions of dollars to take control of TransCanada PipeLines. Edper in recent years has taken over Brascan, Noranda, some trust companies and some insurance companies. That was done because of the capital it was able to accumulate as a result of the kind of tax policies and loopholes we have.

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I would like the Minister to tell us how any of these takeovers have produced one new job or caused an improvement in productivity. It was great for the people who control these companies. It increased the financial worth of the companies. But how did these takeovers improve the economy? How did these takeovers improve productivity and how did these takeovers create one new job?

Mr. MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member seems to have a bias against large corporations. He is welcome to that bias. That is his own concern. We on this side of the House, however, see benefit both in large corporations and in small business to the total society. Some of the mergers and acquisitions that took place over past years may, on analysis, seem to the critics to be of limited benefit publicly. Others may seem to be equally of very real benefit. Synergism can come from mergers, corporate rationalization and new sources of capital can be accumulated for further investment. The ability to compete abroad with large corporations from other countries can be enhanced through merger and acquisition policies. The question was addressed extensively some years ago in the