

Supply

[Text]

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOMES

Question No. 3,542—**Mr. Schellenberger:**

From 1970 to date, by year, what amount was spent on the financing and construction of new houses and on housing rehabilitation by (a) the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (b) the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (c) the Rural and Native Housing Program (d) any other department or agency?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Forrestall: Madam Speaker, on March 31 I placed on the Order Paper a relatively simple question with respect to the rental of office space by the government in the Quinpool Centre, Quinpool Road, Halifax. If the parliamentary secretary has some objection to answering this, I could phrase the question in another way or put it to him in written form. I simply do not understand why information which must be contained in the rental agreement is not forthcoming after two months.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, I do not know the answer to that offhand but I will be happy to look into it and bring the information to the hon. member's attention.

I ask, Madam Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 58—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—THE ECONOMY

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That this House approves the government taking immediate action to lower interest rates, stimulate production, investment and jobs, strengthen the dollar and lower the rate of inflation.

He said: Madam Speaker, I have today introduced a motion which expresses goals on which I believe this House of Commons can agree, and I would hope that our time today can be spent considering what is happening in Canada, why it is happening, and what we who live in the richest country in the world can do to pull ourselves back to prosperity.

We all know what has happened. Canada is in the worst recession since the reconstruction immediately after the Second World War. We had reports today that the gross national product in the first quarter of 1982 was down 2 per cent. That indicates that for the third quarter in a row Canada has had negative growth. This country, with all our potential and strength, instead of moving forward is slipping and falling backwards.

[Translation]

In May, the unemployment rate was at 10.2 per cent. This means that 1,241,000 Canadians declared they were unemployed, and according to Statistics Canada, there are another 100,000 Canadians who are not included in this percentage because they have given up their search for employment. Every day, an average of 1,200 jobs are lost, which means that during the weekend, 2,400 Canadians lost their jobs. Another 1,200 will join the ranks of the unemployed today. During the last five months of this year, 4,425 Canadian businesses went bankrupt. Farm bankruptcies have increased by 61 per cent over last year. Our manufacturing sector is operating at 70 per cent of its production capacity, the lowest level since these figures were first recorded.

[English]

Our productivity as a country has dropped for four years in a row. Real wages are down for the fourth year in a row. Our inflation rate was 11.3 per cent as of April, 1982, while the United States rate is only 6.6 per cent. Interest rates in this country are going up again. Our dollar is trading at the lowest level in its history. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) claims it is not fair to compare the Canadian dollar with the American dollar, and I suppose he is right. We should be comparing the Canadian dollar with the American cent because that, unfortunately, is the comparison which counts today.

• (1520)

The government made an error of 60 per cent in calculating its budget deficit. The deficit will be somewhere between \$16 billion and \$18 billion. In seven months a 60 per cent government error occurred. We hope that the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), if he speaks today, will at least clear up exactly what the projected deficit is so that Canadians will know just how heavy the burden is that we are facing as a country.

Those are the hard, unchallengeable statistics. Those are the cold facts of the world's richest country sinking gradually into economic disaster. But the disaster is much more than economic. What we are facing in Canada today, as any of us know who travel this country and talk to Canadians, is not just an economic disaster, it is a human tragedy. It is a tragedy that is tearing the hope, the heart and the pride out of thousands of Canadians each day.

We have seen the facts about the number of Canadians unemployed, the shameful number of Canadians who are out of work. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask my colleagues in the House of Commons to think about the neighbour of the man or the woman who has just lost a good job and is worrying if he or she is going to be next. Think about the parents of children coming out of school with no work to go to. Put yourself in the place of a woman or a man who is the only provider for a family and who has either lost a job or fears that job will go tomorrow, next week or next month. If I might