

We can find other examples. We reached out to home owners in trouble through the mortgage renewal plan. We reached out to businesses in the worst circumstances—

Mr. Riis: How?

Mr. Fisher: —through the Small Business Development Bond.

Mr. Riis: That is not available.

Mr. Fisher: And we reached out to big businesses like Chrysler and Massey-Ferguson because their impact was so significant for the whole economy. We have no apologies for helping big or small business when the whole country prospers as a result. Not only do the workers prosper but so do small businesses, other businesses, individual operators and communities who rely on these large operations as well as small ones. We reached out to the farmers last June through the \$400 million addition that we put into the Farm Credit Corporation.

We have seen this Government reach out to those most in need while we asked others to try to use their own resources to make do. This has been the area of the greatest dispute. Has the Government been able to do enough? Should the Government do more? Has the Government been spending too much? Should the Government spend less? These are the questions where the heart of the political debate on the recession has taken place. I welcome suggestions that would make us a more effective administrator of all of these programs.

Finally, as we have seen in this House, the Government has used communities' resources to stimulate the economy when no one else was prepared to do that. I am speaking about our spending. Can you imagine the situation, Mr. Speaker, if we had followed the advice from some quarters and cut back our spending?

Mr. Riis: What quarters?

Mr. Fisher: What quarters, our friend asks. I will keep the debate non-partisan.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fisher: I think if we had instead not increased our deficit, if we had not continued our spending and if we had not been concerned about our social programs, our economy would have been even flatter had we followed the advice of those who said our deficit was too high. Instead we used the deficit. The deficit, or Government spending, is a synonym for community resources and for Canada's resources. We used Canada's resources as a way to cushion those people about whom we have just spoken and who are most in need. We used those resources to spread out the hard times through time, to borrow against the time when the recovery comes and prosperity is returned. We borrowed from those more prosperous future times in order to give ourselves a bit of leeway and provide a bit of stimulus to our economy today.

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Those are the actions the Government has taken in response to some pretty tough economic times. I think they arise out of the same sense of moral concern reflected in the early part of the Bishops' statement. I think we should welcome those statements. We need more of them, not only from the Bishops who have given us a moral imperative, but we also need lots of this kind of feedback from business people who can give us a very practical kind of recipe for our behaviour. We need to hear constantly and regularly from labour and co-operatives who can tell us very often, in as sophisticated a way as we can invent for ourselves, what we need to do to repair our economy.

Mr. Riis: But will you listen?

Mr. Fisher: I welcome these statements from the Bishops, Mr. Speaker. I hope the Bishops in turn will take the time to study what the Government has done. They will see that our focus has been, as they urge the creation of jobs and the opportunities for individuals, that we have tried to share our national wealth so as to create a safety net for those most in need. They will see if they look at what we have done over the past few years that we have tried to get to the basic motivators in our economy, to business and the private sector, and to give that part of our economy as much of a boost as we can.

Finally, they will see that we have tried constantly to bring our economy into our own hands and control so that it will indeed be our own national Canadian economy. Those are courses the Bishops urge us to follow. I think we have done much of that very, very proudly in very difficult times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there Hon. Members rising to ask questions?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question to put to the Hon. Member. I regret having to do it. He said that he was proud of the record in very difficult times. Is he telling the House that he is proud of the unemployment record in the country? Is he telling the country by his statement in the House today that he is proud of the fact that, notwithstanding the Government's efforts, there are still so many people unemployed and there is still such misery? Is he telling the House he is proud of the fact that a young person from my constituency who came to see me today said that she wanted her Member of Parliament to meet the most highly educated welfare recipient in the City of Nepean? Is he proud of that kind of situation? I would think the Hon. Member would regret saying that the Government has done its best. The Government has failed. Is that not a more honest face to put on the situation today?

Mr. Fisher: Mr. Speaker, our good friend from Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) said at the beginning of his statement he regretted having to ask the question. After hearing his question, I can understand why. Of course not. I do not think there is a politician alive who would undertake any action which would deliberately lead to the kinds of conditions the Hon. Member has described.