

Economic Conditions

with such an energy policy billions of dollars which were previously exported to other countries by the multinationals will remain here. Let us be proud of that policy, let us be proud of that policy—

Mr. Rae: That's not true!

[English]

Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi): Do not be afraid to say that our profits are higher, but less goes into exploration. Members opposite must stop saying we do not have a good policy. They talk about frustration and alienation in this country. It is not the people who are frustrated. Most times it is the politicians on the other side of this chamber who are frustrated. This frustration is broadcast all across the country by politicians, not by the people. I suggest they show some pride.

[Translation]

They talk about policy but perhaps they should spend a little time in Europe. A gallon of gas costs \$3 there. Here we still have an energy policy acceptable to all Canadians. For the first time, Mr. Speaker, we have a Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who advocates great policies. When we refer to free exchange of goods and services or to distribution of natural wealth to all citizens, that is what we mean by a policy which helps all classes of society. The energy belongs to all Canadians, Mr. Speaker, and the time has come to start benefiting from that policy. How hypocritical, Mr. Speaker, after one year they are scandalized by the attitude of people who cannot refrain from spreading all kinds of falsehoods throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, the debate would have been much more useful had it been held at a more appropriate time. No one here will convince me that we have managed to improve the economic situation during the night. If we were really going through a crisis as described yesterday and if people were really responsible for the administration of the country we would have behaved more seriously. Many suggestions have been made but I am not at all sure they were always the ideal solutions to redress our economy.

Mr. Speaker, again I say that our finance minister has acted in the best interest of Canadians. Let us be realistic and honest. Let us compare our economic conditions and those of other major industrialized countries in the world. Let us compare conditions with our fellow citizens and we will readily conclude that we are privileged indeed. Mr. Speaker, we should stop spreading insecurity in all ranks of Canadian society. Our economy does not stand to gain anything from such comments as those voiced by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) and the former finance minister.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, that we are going through hard times and that interest rates are high. I hope this situation is temporary and I would urge all politicians to stay calm in these circumstances. I live in a very remote area, Mr. Speaker, but I can state clearly that our aluminium, pulp and paper and lumber industries are all operating at full capacity. They have

made great progress in recent years because of the gap between Canadian and American currencies.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think we should be unduly alarmed because after all there are certain regions in our country where the economic outlook is promising, including mine. My area is known especially for its export products and that is certainly an asset these days. Of course we may see danger signals if our dollar grows weaker still because of imported goods. But perhaps the time has come in that so-called economic crisis as described last night for us to have a second look at some of our habits and put more emphasis on Canadian goods instead of always seeking imported products. Mr. Speaker, we have all kinds of agricultural products in this country which, in the past, may not have been the envy of consumers, but which are just as nourishing and certainly lower priced than produce imported from California or Florida.

I know, Mr. Speaker that we ought not to play hide-and-seek. We find ourselves in a rather difficult situation but I am convinced that it is temporary and that we are not going to bolster our economy by holding the kind of debate we have had during the night and by advocating unacceptable solutions right and left and limiting ourselves to criticizing. I wish we were all more serious in this debate. Let us put an end to doom and gloom statements which upset the Canadian people and let us take economic corrective measures as soon as possible so that the have-nots will continue to progress at the same rate as all others and that our economy will grow without interruption. I am convinced that our predicament will not last. Nonetheless let us wish all Canadians a happy holiday season.

● (0920)

[English]

Mr. Fred King (Okanagan-Similkameen): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I was utterly astonished that the hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Dionne) who just spoke, a member from a province whose good people have asked us to believe that the Canadian system of government, social and economic order has been offensive to the interests of the people of that province, would not understand that we, too, should take offence. Believe me, as a member from western Canada, we are offended by some of the things that take place in Canada. We believed those hon. members when they spoke about their objection to certain things. We accepted their word and we want them at this time to accept the fact that we also want change. I am amazed that there is no such reciprocity in the hearts of hon. gentlemen opposite.

We have indicated that we have grievances within confederation which are not being adequately addressed. To hear hon. members state in this House that this is a pipe dream of politicians and does not represent the real emotion and concern of the people who live in the west is utterly beyond my comprehension.