

*Currency Devaluation*

than any other reflected the dramatic change of view that others had of this country.

How could anyone claim that the policies of the PQ party had no effect on our economy? How could anyone argue that the health of our economy is unrelated to unity? How could anyone offer to negotiate the division of Canada without changing the perception which others have of Canada? Yet that is precisely the position that the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) have adopted in recent weeks, a readiness to negotiate the division of this country.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** You are straying from the truth, Gillespie.

**Mr. Gillespie:** Our dollar will climb back, Mr. Speaker, when confidence returns.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** You wouldn't recognize the truth if you fell over it.

**Mr. Gillespie:** The dollar will not climb back through gimmickry. The Tories say that they would prefer to see the dollar at 90 cents.

**Mr. Gillies:** We would prefer to see it where it floats.

**Mr. Gillespie:** Of course it will rise up in due course.

**Mr. Gillies:** When we get a new government.

**Mr. Gillespie:** The Tories, however, propose to get it there in a rather quicker fashion, by fiddling with the Bank of Canada's accounts and listing our gold assets at a higher figure. I believe that that was a proposal of the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies). Confidence cannot be built on gimmickry, it can only be destroyed by an opposition which proposes that it would resort to such gimmickry.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Who writes your speeches, Alastair?

**Mr. Gillespie:** The government has looked at the proposals of the opposition, and they are, clearly, not serious. The Tories had a chance to put their proposals to the governor of the Bank of Canada and, as the news reports noted, the Tories ran out of questions after the first 15 minutes.

**Mr. Gillies:** Source? Source?

**Mr. Gillespie:** The Tories claim to be ready to govern, but have they told the Canadian people through this debate that unit labour costs have helped to make Canadian products non-competitive? Have they told the people that Canadian wage costs have been higher and have been rising in Canada higher than in the United States prior to controls? Have they told the Canadian people that the Canadian dollar has helped to re-establish a cost competitive industry? Have they told the Canadian people that as a result of the Canadian dollar we had a record trade surplus last year of \$3.5 billion? There is every indication that we will have a larger trade surplus this

[Mr. Gillespie.]

year—a trade surplus related to the manufacturing sector, the products sector of our economy.

● (2100)

Have the Tories told the Canadian people that the lower dollar represents an opportunity for Canadian business? Have they told the Canadian people it represents an opportunity for the manufacturing industry, an opportunity which they and we should fully exploit for the benefit of Canada? I do not hear voices on the other side saying to Canadian businessmen, "You have an opportunity as a result of this lower dollar; get out and sell." They want to play politics with that.

In this debate I have not heard that the Tories have told the Canadian people that, as a result of the more competitive Canadian dollar, Canada created over 400,000 new jobs last year. At no time that I can recall, certainly not in the last ten years, has there been that degree of growth in a period when the Canadian labour force has increased by one third, the fastest increase of any labour force in the industrialized world.

The Tories have not come clean with the Canadian people. That is why I have welcomed this debate and the opportunity to put some of these facts on the record. They have not helped Canada at this time. I believe they have distorted the situation in Canada. I think they have emphasized the negative; they have not emphasized the performance and strength of Canada. Theirs has been an erratic voice. At one time their leader was predicting a deficit of \$18 billion when he should have known better. Some of his supporters knew better. I believe he tried to correct himself, but it is not clear that he ever did. He must have known that kind of error would be noticed. I regret that he did not take the opportunity to put the record straight. Other people saw and heard that kind of error.

A short while ago the hon. member for Don Valley was arguing that the deficit in Canada was too high and should be lowered. In recent weeks his leader has been arguing the reverse—that the deficit should be greater. Others outside Canada hear these confusing statements, so is it any wonder that those who are making a judgment in respect to the Canadian dollar are confused? These are the people who would claim to be ready to govern. They have shown themselves completely inept in the economic area, and they have shown themselves to be thoroughly irresponsible. They have made knowingly untrue statements.

Not long ago one of the official spokesmen for the Tory party, the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), claimed publicly that there were Liberals who were speculating against the dollar. He knew perfectly well that those comments would be heard. I suspect that is the reason he made them. Why else would he have made them? When he was challenged he could produce no evidence, because we knew and he knew that they were untrue. It is that kind of statement made inside Canada by people who claim to be ready to govern that others outside Canada are judging. They are aware that the opposition is creating confusion and is being irresponsible.

The opposition can, of course, choose to ignore the threat of separation, as many of them have. They can choose to make