

Employment

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted time has expired. According to House order, I now recognize the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Kelly).

Mr. Norman Kelly (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago I participated in this debate in a rather unofficial manner when I shouted a few remarks across the way to the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie).

Mr. Nielsen: Are you now apologizing?

Mr. Kelly: I am not apologizing because I have discovered that heckling is an honourable tradition of the House. It has been my experience that hon. members of the official opposition probably give better than they receive. Under those circumstances I do not think official apologies are warranted.

Mr. Blaikie: Because the government is so richly deserving of everything it receives.

Mr. Kelly: No. I think it is a function of opposition. After a party has been in opposition for 18 years, it has refined the art of heckling.

Mr. Roberts: They do not have much else to do.

Mr. Kelly: I interrupted the hon. member for a few short seconds by asking him what was the motto of his party in the 1980 election campaign. Since I knew it, I found that his presentation this afternoon was perhaps one of his most dishonest and intellectually backward speeches in the House since I have been here.

Mr. Nielsen: The land is strong!

Mr. Kelly: He flayed the government because in his eyes it was doing things which hurt Canadians. This was intolerable, if not evil, in his eyes.

Mr. McDermid: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kelly: What was the motto of his party in the 1980 election campaign? He did not inform the House, so it is my privilege to redress his error. The motto of his party was: "Short-term pain for long-term gain".

Mr. Epp: What was your party's motto?

Mr. Kelly: For any member of that party opposite to stand up in the House and say that his party—

Mr. McDermid: Your party's motto is: "Long-term pain for no gain".

Mr. Kelly: — would not have inflicted those horrible results upon the Canadian electorate, when they know it was quite prepared to do it—

Mr. Nielsen: I am standing, I am standing.

Mr. Kelly: —could be nothing else but dishonest. I do not blame hon. members opposite for trying glibly to slide around the policy position they took two years ago. They knew then that some tough decisions had to be taken—

Mr. McDermid: And you defeated our budget.

Mr. Kelly: —and now in their mock rhetoric they insist that decisions do not have to be tough.

Mr. McDermid: We are not saying that.

Mr. Kelly: In the interests of honesty, if they believed that tough decisions had to be made then, surely they believe that some tough decisions have to be made now.

Mr. McDermid: We made tough decisions but we helped those people who needed it most.

Mr. Kelly: If I may respond to the comment of the hon. member, I think the government has a fine record of helping those who need help the most.

Mr. McDermid: Tell us about the energy tax.

Mr. Kelly: Of course, the important thing is not to make tough decisions; the important thing is to make wise decisions. Some of these wise decisions may have to be tough or they may have an element of toughness to them, but if they are perceived as being wise and fair—

● (1630)

Mr. McDermid: There isn't a Canadian who thinks you wise.

Mr. Kelly: —then those decisions will have to be recognized by all members of this House as being the right decisions.

The two preceding speakers brought to the attention of the House that Canada's position in the hierarchy of the nation's standard of living has declined precipitously. I agree with him. Our relative position has declined. But Canada's standard of living has not fallen. Canada's standard of living has not risen as rapidly as other countries.

Mr. Nielsen: You are trying to catch up?

Mr. Kelly: The basic explanation for that does not lie primarily in domestic political policies. The explanation for that, as hon. gentlemen opposite know quite well, lies outside of this country with the economies of other areas and other regions.

The European economies, as everyone across the way knows, were devastated during the Second World War. It took them over two decades to recuperate.

Mr. McDermid: Are you saying we need a war?

Mr. Kelly: By the 1970s those European economies were producing on a level that surpassed their productivity of pre-war days. In other words, the answer to hon. gentlemen opposite is that we were number three in an age when compet-