

Economic Conditions

Orwell which I think are very suitable at this point in this debate. The first one reads:

Above all, we cannot play ducks and drakes with a native battery of idioms which prescribes such egregious collocations of vocables as the basic *put up with* for *tolerate* or *put at a loss* for *bewilder*.

This was written by Professor Lancelot Hogben.

The second quote which is just about as relevant as to the speech we have just heard reads as follows:

The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms like a cuttlefish squirting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as "keeping out of politics". All issues are political issues and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia.

Mr. McDermid: That is a good description of the Liberal party.

Mr. Fulton: I do not mean to be too hard on the hon. member from Peace River. I know him quite well as my neighbouring member in northern British Columbia. But I have a couple of quotes here from upstanding Liberals. The first is a question posed by the present Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy). As reported in *Hansard* for October 25, 1979, at page 592 we find the following:

Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance. On October 18, 1978, as reported at page 238 of *Hansard*, when in opposition the minister said:

"These people are being crucified with an 11½ per cent mortgage rate— Would the minister make the judgment now that, as a result of his policies and his government's policies we have the mortgage rate going up to 14½ per cent, the people of Canada are not being crucified but are being drawn and quartered by an unmerciful government that no longer has a care for those ordinary people? Does he realize the housing industry is in severe recession;—

And on he goes. That is why he was in opposition. The Minister for Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) was quoted earlier this evening but I think it is important to have that quote on the record a number of times. As this government sits, it will hear it many more times. Being interviewed, the minister was asked by Mr. Shulman:

SHULMAN: What would you do as a government about interest rates, would you lower interest rates?

GRAY: Yes, I think interest rates should be lower than they are now.

SHULMAN: Yes, I agree they should be lower, would you lower interest rates?

GRAY: Yes, I would.

SHULMAN: And if the interest rates are not lowered after the election, I think you are going to win it, would you be prepared to resign your seat if the government doesn't carry through on that policy?

GRAY: Yes, I would.

I think those quotes say it all. But in all seriousness, I come from a riding where the main industries are fishing, mining, logging, agriculture, smelting and pulp. I was previously employed as a probation and parole officer and I dealt with crime on the streets in my riding. It is time more members in opposition dealt with what I view now as criminal negligence as it relates to the economy.

I do not think we look often enough at the serious cumulative impact of interest rates in such industries as fishing, logging and agriculture. For example, a fisherman does not just have a mortgage on his home; he has a mortgage on his boat, he has a loan on his equipment, he has a loan on his car,

and as interest rates skyrocket, now over 20 per cent, the cumulative impact of all of those loans is devastating. This is particularly so as we see more and more restrictions on fishermen as to where he can fish, because fish are being given away to the Americans at either ends of our zones and the crimp is coming seriously home to rest. The same is true in the logging industry. The independent truck loggers in my riding no longer have the much needed relief from excise tax. That has been dumped on them as well. In my riding alone it is costing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Other members have touched on the serious problems in the agricultural industry with relation to skyrocketing costs of high interest rates for seed and equipment. Canada today perches on the edge of a recurring disaster, and the Liberals across the floor seem unable to comprehend the depths of it. The dollar has plunged to levels seen only in the 1930s. Interest rates today at 17.36 per cent are the highest in history. I should point out that was yesterday. I understand today they will climb again. The purchasing value of the dollar is only half what it was five years ago. The cost of living, viewed through the CPI, is up 11.2 per cent over a year ago.

What of the budget of a month and a half ago which predicted a 9.7 per cent increase for 1980? That increase is likely to break 10 per cent or 10.1 per cent. What trust can the average Canadian have with such inaccuracy?

Mr. Smith: Have faith.

Mr. Fulton: What does all this mean to Canadians? I would like to relate how this economic emergency relates to men, women and families in my riding. Many of the figures are drawn from national statistics but the cumulative impact on fishermen, as I have pointed out, relates not only to their boat loans and equipment, but to nets, cars, homes and so on. The same applies to almost all of the resource and industrial working people in my riding.

First, let us look at the cost of housing. Vacancy rates, for example, in Prince Rupert, have hovered close to zero for months. Starts are down nationally by 20 per cent, and the situation is worse than that in the British Columbia northwest. What does that mean in real and human terms? It is something a lot of members in this House have tended to pass by. It is easy to talk all night about facts and figures and sort of shoot them around in an intellectual debate, but the real human terms are those on which I want to touch now.

What does it mean when the market squeezes from both ends, where no vacancies bring heavy competition not only for rentals but for purchases as well? Naturally, up go the rates for both. Ordinarily this would encourage housing starts. In Canada's history, that has been the case. However, with the mortgage rates going up at the same time, it has put an end to the dream of many families and also to the plans of most builders. The combined skyrocketing housing costs, with prime rates of over 17 per cent today, make the dream for almost all families in my riding impossible.

Let us look at the facts. First, let me ask a question of those responsible for the present policy; for those unaware I am