

Economic Conditions

as they would like because of their responsibilities. Somebody should go to the Minister of Finance and tell him what is going on in this country. Farmers who are desperate come to me. They are paying prime plus 4 per cent. How can one start a business paying prime plus 4 per cent? How can one start a farm? It is absolutely ridiculous. What is the government doing about it? Not a thing. We now have the highest rates in 40 years. We are moving into winter, a tough time of the year in Canada. I am absolutely shocked at the reaction we have been getting day after day in question period.

In closing, I ask that the Liberal party, the Government of Canada, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister of Canada, for a refreshing change, please put Canada and Canadians first.

Mr. Roger Simmons (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what my good friend, the hon. member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid), had to say. To say the least, I was disappointed, as I am sure anyone who heard or watched him tonight would be, with his personal vendetta against the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). There is no question that he and the Prime Minister differ on many issues, but I ask him to conceal his personal animosity toward the gentleman and address himself to the issues. I am sure he would have a much more receptive audience than he has when he is personal and derogatory, as he has been. I find that unfortunate.

What I found to be the cheapest shot of all was that the hon. member asked where the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) was at a time when everybody in this House knows that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is recovering from an accident in which he injured his foot. This is really not the time to be so low as to attack a gentleman in those circumstances.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My point of order is that I did not say that. I mentioned that the minister was ill. I said that we wanted to hear his voice loud and clear on the issues. I did not mention anything about his being out of the House because he is ill. I am sorry, but that was a low blow.

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I recognize, as you do, that that is no point of order. The hon. member for Brampton-Georgetown has said that it was a low blow, and that is what I was attempting to say when he interrupted me. I am glad to hear that he agrees with me.

The hon. member also talked about double standards. In a few moments I shall talk about double standards.

Mr. Deans: Come on, Rog, raise your sights.

Mr. Simmons: My socialist friends are all worked up again tonight. They are duly exercised. The Tories and New Democrats wanted an emergency debate on the economy, so we are having it. We have sat here tonight and listened with great interest to what they have had to say. I have listened to most of the speakers over the last several hours, but what have we heard? What have they been saying? What are their solutions? They really have not made up their minds. They have proffered several solutions depending upon who was speaking and depending on the whim of the moment. Some of the solutions advanced would fuel inflation even further, which would hardly solve the problem. Other schemes they came up with would drive inflation through the roof. Arguments were put forward in favour of approaches which would increase unemployment even further. At the same time they spoke out of the other side of their mouths about how high unemployment is now. The hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) cannot make up his mind about how high it is. He does not have the figure straight as to whether the number is 800,000 or one million but, give or take a couple hundred thousand, he is concerned about the issue.

Mr. Rae: The figure is 1.3 million.

Mr. Simmons: Some hon. members espoused policies which would decrease the purchasing power of low income Canadians. Those are the kinds of things we have been hearing about throughout this evening. We have heard solutions which would further aggravate the situation.

However, to their credit, dubious credit though it may be, they do have one thing in common, and that is that they are unified, consistent and undying in their preaching of gloom and doom. To listen to them one would think there is nothing good about this country. To listen to the gentlemen of the NDP and the Tory party who have spoken tonight one would think there is nothing right in this country whatsoever. We just hear a constant harping about gloom and doom and gloom and doom, as if somehow that approach could itself solve the problem. The outlook for the world economy especially is indeed a grim one in the short term. A good part of the problem is that Canada and other industrialized nations have not yet recovered, or even adequately adjusted, to the 1978 oil price shock. That is a good part of the problem. It should not be understated. I suggest that it has been understated time and again by a number of speakers opposite.

While the outlook in some respects is grim, I believe that to tell the full story in all honesty it is important to point out that it is not all bad news. It is not all as desperate and as fraught with gloom and doom as speakers opposite would have us believe.

Mr. Kilgour: Tell us the good news.

Mr. Simmons: For the hon. gentleman opposite I intend to get to some of the good news.

Mr. Kilgour: Do it right now.