

Supply

• (1830)

I find it somewhat interesting that he can reflect this position. In fact, many of them were critical of the job his brother did in ruining the province of Ontario.

I notice that he makes that comment in here. He says in the resolution: "It is economic mismanagement that has caused record bankruptcies, put 1.4 million Canadians out of work, and brought about the deindustrialization of Canada, especially Ontario."

It is a pity the member was not in Toronto the day I was to listen to a phone-in show on CFRB radio. It is one of the most widely listened to shows in the Toronto area. The subject matter was: What has gone wrong with the economy? What is causing the concerns of the business community, of the consuming public?

In spite of the best efforts of the radio talk show host to encourage the discussion to criticize the federal government, he was unsuccessful in the space of an hour in eliciting one negative call about the federal government. But he certainly was successful, in spite of his efforts, in putting calls on criticizing the provincial government of Ontario for the way it has taxed small business. It was in fact those callers who specifically criticized the provincial government's interference in the Ontario economy, the massive skill with which it interfered in the last five years, as being the brunt of the problem that they in fact were experiencing.

I am not prepared to simply accept that. I appreciate that there are some problems today in the Ontario economy, and I am also prepared to accept that there are problems throughout the entire Canadian economy. We cannot just throw these things away in isolation and say that there is nothing happening or that there are no attempts to improve the situation. I would like to talk about some of those things.

I have just listened to two speakers—and they were rather eloquent—comment on how desperate things are in their parts of Ontario. I represent a riding in Ontario as well, and perhaps my riding is the real Ontario. They must live in a different part of the world. I appreciate that Windsor has a large automotive industry and that they are claiming that the automotive industry is destitute. I understand that. Of course, my riding in Ontario has right beside it the great city of Oshawa, which is known for its automotive participation as well.

I do not know where these members live, but in the town of Whitby, which is in my constituency, in the last two years there has been a tremendous influx of automotive parts manufacturers. They moved to Whitby. They may have come from the United States or they may have come from Japan, but having listened to the two speakers just now, I believe they probably came from their ridings because they thought they would get better representation on the other side of Toronto. Maybe that is where they came from.

I am not sure where they came from, but I can tell you that all is not dead and done in the car industry, by any stretch of the imagination. Yes, there is a slowdown today, but the reason for the slowdown is simply one of when you don't sell it, you don't produce it. That is the problem they have. It has nothing to do with any economic free trade agreement or any of these other heresies that one hears on occasion. It is simply a function of economics: when consumers stop spending, they obviously stop producing.

Mr. Wappel: Why does he stop spending, Rene? That is the question.

Mr. Soetens: What happens in this scenario is that we have to carry on and govern. There are things we have to deal with. We have to deal with them in the long term, not the short term. We have tried the short-term solution. In fact, we tried it rather extensively in Ontario in the last five years and proved that it did not work. In the previous five years we tried it here in Ottawa with another Liberal government, which simply thought that we could spend our way out of the scenario that we are in. That obviously did not work. We went through the greatest recession in a long time, back in 1981–82. Spending government money is not the solution, because the government only has one place to find its money; it really does not have any of its own. It comes from the taxpayers of Canada. When you take it from the taxpayers of Canada, they are the ones who object and they are the ones who then do not have it to spend.

I would like to carry on a little further because a number of members have also referenced the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement as part of their problem. I note that one of the two speakers comes from and in fact mentioned the great agricultural area of Canada he represents, and it is. I have no doubt that it is probably one of the more attractive areas for farming and for the