

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are seven minutes remaining in questions and comments to the hon. member for Ontario. The hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood had the floor.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, just a short preamble of my comments before we went into Question Period.

I indicated parts of the member's speech where I quite frankly agreed with some of the statements he had made.

As I pointed out, we are not here just to assist those who are advantaged. We are also challenged and it is our primary responsibility on this side of the House to speak for those people who are going through difficult times in all communities across Canada where there are people unemployed.

There is room for the Government of Canada to do more work with the 1.7 million entrepreneurs in this country. The greatest hope for job creation lies within that sector of the economy. I believe that with low interest rates and low inflation, it improves their position to participate in bringing people off the welfare and unemployment insurance rolls.

This is what I would like to ask the member. Does he not share the view of many that there is a real problem with confidence in that particular sector of our economy, namely the small and medium-sized entrepreneur? We are always being challenged here to present ideas. Does he not think that it would be a good idea to review the standing committee that put forward employment opportunities for the 1980s? This report was produced in 1982, I believe. The Minister of State for Finance and Privatization was part of that committee. There are 186 ideas within this report that the government could review or pick and choose. They are all ideas on how to put Canadians back to work.

What is wrong with reviewing that? What is wrong with taking some of these ideas and using them to lever the entrepreneurship of this country so that they can be motivated to take a chance on the 1.5 million Canadians who are out of work? If each company hired one person in the next 60 days we would have a much better economy on our hands and we would reduce that \$35 billion to \$40 billion draw which is all taxpayers' money. It would even give us some opportunity or option to reduce taxes.

Why does the government not see if it can use that force to put Canadians back to work?

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the questions from the member for Broadview—Greenwood.

The member is certainly correct in talking about low inflation and low interest rates being of benefit to the small business community and the entrepreneur. He should also of course agree that low inflation and low interest rates are also significant benefits to the unemployed and those on fixed incomes, whether they are senior citizens or others. Inflation is the worse curse that they face. There are some real positive things and I think the member has acknowledged some of that in his comments.

I am sorry I am not personally familiar with this 1982 report. I guess the report that the member refers to talks about many opportunities. From 1982 to 1992, if I heard the minister correctly today, there are over 2 million more people employed in the work force. That is not to say that we should be satisfied at that level. I am sure that specific ideas could come out of that. This could be combined with some of the ideas that are in the budget this year such as improvements to accessing funds for small businesses and the re-regulation of the financial industry to allow entrepreneurs access to funds. There are many things that can be done.

In conjunction with the member, I look forward to the government coming forward and saying: "Look at item number 10 in that proposal and let's do it". It could also be number 11 or number 12. I suspect that many of them have already been implemented.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Ontario in his speech this morning criticized the remarks of my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River who pointed out that the policies of this Conservative government had forced tax increases on the municipalities and the provinces. The hon. member for Ontario said that if municipalities had increased taxes then that was their doing and we should condemn them and not the federal government.

I want to ask the hon. member this. Does he not realize that when his government, the Conservative government, cut unemployment insurance benefits, as it did a few years ago in Bill C-21, and when it made it more difficult to qualify for unemployment insurance and when it shortened the benefit period and made other