

Supply

ment. It may operate in terms of small business and I think we ought to do everything we can to encourage small business. However, the reality is that the private sector in Atlantic Canada cannot pick up all the slack and create the thousands of new jobs which are needed there.

● (1420)

The Government of Canada has a responsibility under the Canadian Constitution to provide services to all areas of the country and to provide equal opportunities for Canadians wherever they live, whether it be in Manitoba, Quebec or indeed in the Atlantic area. I note that the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall) is laughing. She may laugh now but I would tell her that the smugness of the smiles, attitude and intellectual bankruptcy of members of the Conservative Party is beginning to show right across the country. That smugness and lack of concern for the people of Atlantic Canada is no more evident than in the statement with which I presume she had something to do, known as the economic statement of the Minister of Finance and the accompanying blue book.

There is a great deal that the Government can do if it takes its responsibility seriously. We in Atlantic Canada do not want to receive handouts time after time. However, the hard reality is that the unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada is overwhelming and the Government of Canada, out of a sense of fairness and justice to the mosaic of Canada, ought to inject sizeable sums of money to improve the economic plight of those people who live in that region.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments?

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I have a question to ask the Hon. Member before we move on to debate. I appreciate some of the comments that he has made about the unemployment situation in the Atlantic provinces, and of course, one of the reasons my Party raised this issue is our concern with unemployment, not just in the Atlantic provinces but across the country.

When the new Government took power, it pledged that its priority would be jobs, jobs, jobs. In fact, no discernible action by the new Government can be linked with any change in unemployment although the Government did happen to benefit from some changes in the American economic situation and the lowering of interest rates.

How does the Hon. Member defend the fact that the unemployment situation in his riding has gotten to the state it is now at when in fact it happened under almost 20 years of Liberal governing? The Liberal Party had the opportunity to create the sustained and self-sustaining employment that Atlantic Canada so badly needs.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Hon. Member has asked this question. Although I have taken the substance of the motion quite seriously, I think one can see quite evidently that in moving this motion today, members of the New Democratic Party are trying without success to move

into Atlantic Canada and profit from the misery with which those individuals in Atlantic Canada are faced.

The Hon. Member asked why there is such a high unemployment rate even though we had an administration that was in power for an extended period of time. I would like to take this a little further, Mr. Speaker. I was the Member of Parliament for my riding for only four years. Who was the Member of Parliament before me? Was it a Liberal? Was it a Tory? No, it was a member of the New Democratic Party. However, in four short years the Liberal Government provided to the Cape Breton Development Corporation in excess of \$628 million in an attempt to assist Canadians in that area of the country.

To show the hypocrisy of the New Democratic Party and the Hon. Member who asked the question. I can indicate that members of the New Democratic Party realized their newfound concern for Atlantic Canada after taking four trips to Atlantic Canada. They took one trip to St. John's, one to Halifax, one to Sydney and one to Moncton. Apparently P.E.I. does not count. This shows that the hypocrisy of NDP Members, as stated by the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens), is such that they wish to profit from the misery of other areas of the country. I would say to that Member—not to other Members but to that Member—that he ought to be ashamed of his hypocritical stance and his—

Mr. Tobin: It didn't sell in Ontario.

Mr. Dingwall: It didn't sell in Ontario. He ought to be ashamed of his suggestion that other administrations prior to this one had no concern for that area of Canada.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Hon. Member as well. I would like to preface my question by saying that the hypocrisy is on his part. In fact, northern Ontario, which is very similar to Atlantic Canada, has 12 federal seats in the House of Commons. Year after year, 11 out of those 12 seats were held by Liberals. Several of those Liberals were Cabinet Ministers. In fact, the seat that I now hold was previously held by a Cabinet Minister. Those Members had their hands on the levers of power. They could have reconstituted and restructured the economy of the country by eliminating single-industry communities and coming to grips with the very serious structural problems that exist. They never did. The Hon. Member has an awful lot of gall to be able to stand in the House now and accuse Members of the New Democratic Party, whose record of restructuring those economies and improving the employment situation in the western provinces in which they govern is second to none.

I would like the Hon. Member to come clean with the Canadian people and tell them how he can rise in the House after the Liberal Party has governed over the majority of the last 50 years and masquerade by indicating that he has any solutions to the problems. Perhaps he ought to look to members of the New Democratic Party for some new ideas.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say that I would be prepared at any time to stack the record of that Hon. Member