

Supply

Mr. Wright: I am waiting.

Mr. Evans: The answer to the problem is not to protect or to try to protect an industry which will face competitive pressures year after year. Those pressures will become more intense. The question is how we can help the community and the people in it.

Mr. Keeper: Elect the NDP.

Mr. Evans: How can we help them adjust to the new realities and the industries of the future? How can we help people move from low-paying jobs in certain industries, which are fading and dying, into jobs with a future, high pay and better standards of living? Those are the issues that we should be discussing, Mr. Speaker. We can rail at each other about inflation and high interest rates, and say, "You blame us, we blame you", and when the day is over nothing is accomplished, or we can try to come to grips with the real issue, that is people issues, Mr. Speaker. People issues are not solved by throwing more money at them.

● (1710)

I do not want to be unfair to the hon. member for Winnipeg-St. James or to accuse him of saying things that he did not say, but it seemed to me that he was saying that government could solve a problem by throwing more money at it. I can guarantee that will not solve a problem, Mr. Speaker. That would only lead to bigger deficits, higher interest rates, higher inflation and reduce our competitive position. It would mean that we would not be able to trade effectively in the world and would bring about declining standards of living. That is not what he wants, it is not what I want and it is not what any Canadian wants. The government is trying to take a more medium-term outlook at our economic situation and to come to grips with the economic issues.

I beseech hon. members opposite to try to make a positive, useful contribution that will help us with these problems. I ask them to think about these distributive issues and help us develop policies that will result in Canadians becoming better off, not worse off.

Mr. Bill Wright (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, we all know now how insensitive the Liberals are when a member can actually stand up in the House and tell us that unemployment and high interest rates are not a problem. It makes some of us wonder what we are doing here.

There are no other issues, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member can talk all he wants about adjusting to the future and about fear of the future. The hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) gave us the typical "on the one hand and on the other hand" approach.

We all recognize the problems that exist across the country, Mr. Speaker. If we go to Newfoundland we find that up to 50 per cent of fishermen are unemployed, but the hon. member for Ottawa Centre says that is not a problem. If we go to New Brunswick we find that 50 per cent of people in the forestry industry are unemployed, but the hon. member for Ottawa Centre says that is not a problem. If we go to Quebec we find

that over 30 per cent of the manufacturing industry is unemployed, but the hon. member for Ottawa Centre says that is not important. If we go to Ontario we find that at least 30 per cent of the automobile industry is unemployed, but the hon. member for Ottawa Centre says that is not important. He says that is not the issue, that things are far more complicated than that.

If we go to the prairies we find that the agricultural industry is on its knees because of the policies of the government. We find people in the pork industry going bankrupt and people in the beef industry going bankrupt. That is not important, says the hon. member for Ottawa Centre, the former parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance. If we go to B.C.—

Mr. Evans: You are misleading the House.

Mr. Wright: —we find 50 per cent of people in the forest industry unemployed, but the hon. member for Ottawa Centre says that it is not important.

Mr. Evans: That is not true. I said it was important. You are the one who is saying it is not important.

Mr. Wright: The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) is not here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, but I should like to draw attention to some misleading information that he gave to the House on another occasion. The estimates for 1981-82 showed that \$120 million would be spent on summer student programs. Actually, in 1981-82 \$100 million was spent. Then the 1982 estimates showed that the government was going to spend \$100 million on that program. That is when the minister said he was going to create \$20 million worth of summer jobs for students. He claimed that was an increase, but in fact he will not spend as much as he spent last year when there was close to eight per cent unemployment in the country. That is the type of thing we have to put up with, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) is not in the House this afternoon either. I lived in his riding 25 years ago and at that time the unemployment rate was 25 per cent. It is still 25 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Just the other day he told the House that he would let his record stand. Statistics show that the highest number of government grants—and Liberal MPs get most of them—have gone to his riding. He provides grants, subsidies and promises to his constituency, but little else.

I should like to deal with a rather contentious issue now, Mr. Speaker, namely, the life insurance industry. The Minister of Finance stated in the budget that he was going to tax accrued income on life insurance. The industry took him to task and asked him to produce the figures that this proposition was based on. He said it was based on a typical life insurance policy and that he could back up his figures. I wrote to him and asked whether that typical life insurance policy was a participating or a non-participating policy, what insurance company rate book was used, what year it was compiled, if it was a Canadian or a foreign company, and so on. Mr. Speaker, there is no typical life insurance policy and the minister cannot