

Supply

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of Atlantic Canada that only in passing and in the last gasping breath did the Minister of Powell River get off his philosophical diatribe and approach the subject matters which are of concern to Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Skelly: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McCain: It is of no value to talk in those terms—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): That's not a point of order.

Mr. Skelly: A point of order it certainly is. I am not a Minister nor a member of the Treasury benches, and I am certainly not a man of the cloth.

Mr. McCain: The Church and the Government are fortunate in that regard. We do not have to look forward to either.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: Mr. Speaker, the matter is ever so much more serious than that. I would like to draw attention to the *Chronicle-Herald* issue of Wednesday, May 18, which printed the full text of the remarks of Mr. Robbie Shaw, Vice-President, Administration and Finance, Dalhousie University. The remarks which are recorded in the newspaper are those which he recently delivered to the Rotary Club of Wolfville. He touches on several matters, but among others he mentioned the fact that there was appointed, at one point in time, a group of people in Government to arrange for a National Economic Development Conference. Mr. Shaw was appointed or hired by Mr. Pitfield to undertake or participate in the development of this Conference and to the concept of cooperation between the various segments of the economy of Canada.

I think it is rather interesting to note that Mr. Shaw was very much surprised when he was retained in the same capacity under the Clark administration and therefore has had considerable bipartisan participation in Canadian policy and the subject matter of our economics. He drew attention to many matters, and I would love to have 40 minutes in which to speak, in which case I would read his speech because I think it is something which should be in the record of this House in full. However, time does not permit that.

In his address, he stated:

—there are many fundamental problems remaining in the Canadian economy.

He listed five. He stated:

—Unemployment is projected to remain at unprecedented levels for several years, in spite of substantially improved economic activity.

—Canada is experiencing a severe decline in productivity relative to many of its trade competitors.

—Recently, heavy international competition has developed for the sale of our natural resources such as nickel and coal.

—Developing countries are providing growing competition in the sale of many of our traditional manufactured goods.

These are some of the problems which he outlined and which we must address. He also pointed out that we are in an adversarial position, and one of the paragraphs is headlined: Setting "adversarial". What it means is that the various economic forces in this nation are in an adversarial position and are not cooperating in the direction of Canadian economy,

which will correct that the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) might correct and all the political Premiers in Atlantic Canada never can correct until we get away from the adversarial situation.

Let me quote again from the paragraph under that heading:

Virtually every major developed country in the world has a tradition of having some form of structure that formally permits the three economic players to meet on an equal ground to exchange information. In most cases, this has resulted in the building of some form of consensus on major problems affecting economic development in the country.

Even in the United States, which has less formal tripartite structures than virtually any other country in the western world, achieves a greater degree of meeting of minds in dealing with government;—

This also includes dealings with labour and business.

When the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) took office, Mr. Shaw was then dismissed from his position in the development of the economic conference, a job which he was hired to do. After the election of 1980, he stated:

All initiatives regarding the National Economic Development Conference and the establishment of a formal consultative process, came to a halt.

That was a rather tragic remark made by someone hired by Mr. Pitfield and retained by Mr. Clark. He went on to outline problems which we should recognize as follows:

1. That we recognize that we have some substantial economic and social problems in Canada; problems that won't be solved by a simple international economic recovery. We must recognize that these problems will require more open-minded and imaginative thinking by management and labour in this country.

2. We must recognize that business, government and labour are becoming increasingly interdependent on each other.

I wish I could expand upon that, but time does not permit it due to the specifics which I think I must address. It is a philosophy which I have tried to enunciate in the years that I have been in Ottawa. Unfortunately, I do not have the profile to obtain a full page in the *Chronicle-Herald* or any other newspaper in Canada where I could state that the economy of Canada can go nowhere until such point in time as the Government, management and labour do in fact sit down around the same table and assess our economic problems one by one, but not as a sector, because I say to Your Honour that there is no way that every mine in Canada can pay the same wage as every other mine in Canada.

Mr. Huntington: Absolutely right.

Mr. McCain: It may be necessary for different arrangements to be made between business, Government and labour in individual circumstances throughout the economy of Canada. That is what this man is saying.

Mr. Evans: Good point.

Mr. McCain: Until we get that in place, we shall go nowhere in this country's economic development or in the reduction of unemployment. He states, as the Government has stated, that unemployment will remain at unbearably high levels for several years to come. It is on that basis that the Government of Canada should begin to address the Atlantic