

*Trade Policies*

robbing us of practically everything. It is also indecent that the ever-increasing number of social programs failed to bridge the income gaps and achieved nothing more than an increase in bureaucracy. The least we can expect now from Liberals is that they keep their mouths shut until they get a new direction, a new leader who, it is to be hoped, will be able to get rid of the old ignorant and incompetent team whose inefficiency is only matched by their irresponsibility. This is demonstrated by the fact that none of them in this House has the ability and the competence to become prime minister. That is a serious shortcoming for the main opposition party.

I can see the degree of masochism in them when they retell once more in which state they have left the country after 16 years in power. Mr. Speaker, Canada is forced to borrow to pay off the interest on its debt. This shows what we have inherited from the Liberal administration.

In 1974, the government had revenues of \$19,366 million and spendings of \$20 billion. In 1976, the expenditures had reached \$33,181 million, revenues \$29,159 million and the deficit \$4,021 million. In 1977, the deficit increased from \$4 billion to \$6,250 million. From 1977 to 1978, it increased from \$6,249 million to \$10,035 million; and this year the government is announcing an even larger deficit, which means that the percentage of the deficit as compared with the total expenditures of the government which was 4 per cent in 1975, went up to 12 per cent in 1976, to 18 per cent in 1977 and to 25 per cent in 1978. Mr. Speaker, if we make a projection for the next four years based on the same rate of increase as in the past, we find ourselves with 32 per cent in 1979, 39 per cent in 1980, 46 per cent in 1981 and 53 per cent in 1982. I can therefore understand why the Liberal party is telling the Progressive Conservatives that they should urgently correct their mistakes and put Canada on the road to recovery. I can understand them. We now have to borrow to pay the interest on the national debt. I do not know of any other country in the western world which has to do the same! Is there another country which is forced to borrow to balance its payments and which will have to sell its gas at prices lower than the world prices to make both ends meet? We are selling everything, lock, stock and barrel.

This is the Liberal heritage of those who followed the saying "divide and conquer" to remain in power. They confronted region against region, province against province, culture against culture. That government, led by the messiah of national unity, remained in power by violating our civil liberties, the rights of the provinces, and most important, our right to economic progress and the integrity of our currency. In this regard, I would like to remind once again the House of the comments made by the governor of the Bank of Canada himself who stated that there was no alternative but to comply with the decisions of the Federal Reserve Board, in order not to have our dollar devalued again, because there is no more room to manoeuvre. Why is there no room to manoeuvre?

Because of the huge deficit in our trade balance, and that our deficit is too high.

Mr. Speaker, indecency has its limits; it borders on obscenity. How they are embarrassed now! They are only three members out of 114 in this House. I know why they are not anxious to take part in this debate. However, Mr. Speaker, I cannot shy away; we cannot shirk our responsibilities as members of Parliament. As I have often said, the role of the opposition is not to defeat government or to create opportunities to try to defeat the government, but to force them to take their responsibilities, to introduce sound legislation before this House, to make public sound decisions and to bring forward policies that will help, before it is too late, redress our economy and put the country back on the road to progress. What is being done on the Progressive Conservative side? Nothing! From time to time they come out with short statements, and that is all. When are they going to move?

● (1520)

I look forward to the day when we in this House are confronted with real legislation, with real economic policies, when we find out that the government finally decided to use adequate means, to give itself the tools needed to put the Canadian economy back on the rails and to give Canadians a renewed confidence in their country's prosperity. Rather, we have a vision that projects nowhere, statements by the leaders that boil down to contradictions. We hear a minister announce something, then another minister brings so many qualifications that contradictions are very easily detected. Half-baked programs are being announced. For instance, the legislation that is now before the House is but a half-measure.

Instead of announcing a truly comprehensive policy in the area of housing and residential ownership, we are told of a limited policy to help one group of owners. Of course the most well-off will benefit, but Canadians who pay rent and face problems also are confronted with increased housing costs because of constantly rising interest rates, because those constantly rising interest rates lead to higher fixed costs for landlords, and this freezes more or less new housing developments, and therefore in certain areas there is a lack of housing and this, because of supply and demand, goes against small people, those who are the least capable of paying. Landlord confidence will decline, because of rising interests and other costs. Where are the benefits to them, where is the increase in the allowable contribution to home ownership programs for people who pay rent? There is nothing for them, because as I say, this is only a half-measure.

As far as energy is concerned, there is an unfortunate confusion in this House between oil policy and energy policy—increased consumption, increased supplies. Are we confronted with increased consumption but, are we also faced with increased supplies? This is only delaying the problem. Where is the program ensuring that the energy needed will come from