

That this member or any member of this House should be so insulated from the reality of hundreds and thousands of Canadians who have lost their jobs, their farms, their sources of income, people who are losing every sense of hope for the future, the despair and the depression that exists out there, that he can still stand up in the House today and claim that everything is great, Jack. We are moving right on course. It quite astounds me.

Yes, the international trade situation is changing. There are dramatic changes occurring in the world. The question we have to address and the question the government has to answer is, is the North American free trade agreement and the American free trade agreement the best way we had to deal with it? Is it a good deal? Yes, we needed some agreement with the Americans, though much of the trade already had evolved on an item-by-item basis, where over 80 per cent of the goods we traded back and forth was not affected by any duties.

Not only does this government enter into what we consider to be a bad deal with the Americans, but at the same time it follows a policy of high interest rates and a high Canadian dollar. It is like putting a tariff on all the Canadian goods that we inflicted on ourselves. It is all backwards. We are going into a major recession and the government adds new taxes, the GST. Again it is all backwards.

The economic leadership of this government has been dreadful and Canadians by the hundred of thousands have been paying the personal price in lost jobs, in lost hopes and their lost future.

Mr. James: Mr. Speaker, I will tell one thing to the hon. member. I want to tell him that I have invested in three small businesses. I know what it is like to be out there. Do not give me any lectures, I know. Maybe we can compare what he has invested with what I do. I know what it is like. I have covered all areas, farming, small business, retail, land development and the rest. I know what it is all about. I also know that it is necessary to learn to compete. It is necessary to learn to ring out. We cannot sit back on our laurels.

I have lived on the border of the United States all my life. I can remember as a small boy the kids from Port Huron wore Levis. We could not afford them. They were twice as expensive. We have to compete. We have to get consumer prices down. The only way we are going to have them in a competitive mode is to have a competitive business environment.

Supply

I know what it is all about to go out and invest. I also remember the late 1970s when members across the way were in government, interest rates went to 22 per cent and inflation was at 15 per cent. Does the hon. member want to tell me what it is like to run a business under those conditions? I will tell him we almost went down. We had to ring out. Yes, it is tough medicine to swallow.

It is like the kids who are now 22 years old and are now doing fine, reflecting upon what mother and dad made them do. They did not like it at the time. They did not like to have to come in early. They did not like to be disciplined. When they reflect upon it they always say: "Boy, am I ever glad that my mother and father set me straight".

We are going through tough times and the government had to make some tough decisions. Multiple decisions were taken. I believe Canadians are going to say that this government made those tough decisions and put this country on an economic path that is going to lead us into prosperity.

What does prosperity mean? It means that small business people like myself can carry on and make a decent dollar. In addition, I can hire people and pay decent wages. More than that, the biggest share of their money is not going to the consumables they have to buy. If they make a good salary but there is high inflation their money does not go very far and then they need higher wages. Then we have this escalating, terrible situation we had in the past. We have to level this economic picture out.

With these policies, the government had to make some difficult decisions. The former government, of which the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is a member, had the opportunity to change the fiscal arrangements of this country and they would not do it. They were concerned about votes.

I will tell you that this government is taking these tough decisions. We think they are the right ones and our country will be better for them.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in the last six or seven minutes left before the House is called upon to vote on this motion, I want to say, as Liberal members before me have said today, that Canadians are dispirited. Canadians are disheartened and Canadians lack any hope, not only in this national government but as a result of the report card and the litany of experiences they have had to endure and survive for the last eight years. This situation has led Canadians, in general,