

Supply

are the ones that would provide job opportunities and would take advantage of the employment tax credit and the career access program.

We put questions to the Minister of Employment and Immigration during examination of his estimates. We cautioned him that these programs would not be fully utilized because the state of the general economy still remained at a very low ebb. That results from high interest rates. The Hon. Member should be listening to what people in the industrial and financial communities have been saying, that there is a lack of confidence based upon the record of the Government. Many expenditures are being placed on hold, and some have been on hold for two years now. If we talk with businessmen or people who come to Canada looking for investment opportunities, they tell us in no uncertain terms that they will not participate in any massive investment until such time as an election is called and this Government is tossed out of office.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to intrude at this point in time, particularly in relation to the well known ruling with respect to reflecting upon the presence or absence of Members in the House. There is a well established convention in the House of Commons with respect to allotted days that we have at least one member of the Cabinet present in the Chamber. There is not one member of the administration in the House in response to this allotted day, which is contrary to the conventions of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. I can go even further by stating that Citation 316(c) of Beauséne's Fifth Edition is clear. It is not orderly to reflect upon the presence or absence of Members of the House of Commons. The Hon. Member has made his point. I only hope that Members will stop harping on this during the day.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Elgin (Mr. Wise) at the beginning of his speech spoke about the jobs created in the seven-month period when the Conservatives were in office. It would be instructive for the House to be given some further information about that period of time. Most business leaders and economists understand that results follow an action.

I was not a Member of the House of Commons at that time. Can he tell the House what specific actions were taken by that government to cause the creation of extra jobs, or was he simply referring to some of the proposals that were presented some seven months later, after these jobs had already been created in the Budget which was rejected both by the House and by the country?

● (1130)

Mr. Wise: Mr. Speaker, I am simply reciting the record and the facts. Indeed, I am giving the benefit of the doubt. I am actually reciting Government statistics and facts. A number of things were done during that ten-month period. The very brief time that I have available to me would not allow an adequate explanation of what we were able to achieve during that very brief period of government. I regret very much the Hon.

Member was not here. He certainly would have enjoyed a very favourable period in the House.

Let me tie that in with the importance of small business and medium-sized business in the country. At that time we as a Cabinet were extremely worried because interest rates were pushing 12 per cent. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) stood on this side of the House and said that if they went beyond 12 per cent, if he had occupied a government position at that time he would have the honour to resign.

There was a great deal more business activity going on during that period because there was more confidence in the economy. Small business people were investing in the economy. Interest rates were at 12 per cent. During the 49-month period, in fact a 24-month period taking it to the summer and fall of 1981, the Hon. Member will know what happened. Because of the policies of this Government, interest rates took off. Interest rates rose from the earlier level of 12 per cent and 13 per cent to as high as 21, 22 and 23 per cent. That makes an impossible situation for small business. Consequently, money did not come into the country in view of the lack of confidence shown and our own domestic capital fled the country. Obviously inactivity began in the small business sector and the farming sector as well. Job opportunities since then were simply not available.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not want to be frivolous and I do not want to delay the House, but I believe this is important. It has to do with the point of order raised by my colleague from Saskatoon West. Is it Your Honour's ruling that it is in fact not an established convention of this House that a Minister be present at all times?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order. Is the Hon. Member coming to the point of reflecting on the presence or absence—

Mr. McGrath: You have not heard me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): I am just trying to stop a Member from reflecting on the presence or absence of another Member in this House. If the Hon. Member is rising to do something else, I will listen to him.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I am rising to do something else. I will not name any Member. Consequently that will satisfy your citation from Beauséne. It is an established convention of this House, given the fact that the Government is responsible for the management of the House, that there shall be at least one and usually two Ministers present at all times. Because of your ruling, a Minister came in. As a consequence of your ruling, which I felt was not in the context of the point of order of my colleague, the Minister got up and left the Chamber. It is important because I would not want that to be on the record as a precedent.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, you cited Beauséne's Citation 316(c):