

Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please.

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, I just heard my riding taken in vain. I was sitting here, listening attentively to the Hon. Member's speech. All of a sudden he says I have made a comment about something he was saying. I made no such comment.

Mr. Skelly: I had assumed indirectly it was the kind of comment which the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre made.

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, that is totally uncalled for, and I would ask the Hon. Member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Skelly: In that case, I would have to withdraw it. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation, going back to the philosophies in this House—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): No, no. I feel I have to intervene. I happen to be personally aware of the fact that the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) did not make an intervention with respect to the speech of the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly). I believe the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre is entitled to be protected on the record of the House of Commons. He made no such intervention. It is not normal for the Chair to provide evidence, but in this case I feel that the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre, if he has stated that he did not make such an intervention, is owed that acknowledgement.

Mr. Skelly: I am sure, Mr. Speaker, in my opening remarks I said I would withdraw my comment if I was in error.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Your microphone was not on.

Mr. Skelly: I am sorry, the microphone maybe was not on. I just said that I withdrew the comment after being corrected by the Chair. The situation which I was discussing was the philosophical thinking of both Parties, the Liberal Government and the Conservative Opposition. Both have said, "We are going to leave it alone. The private sector will be the engine of growth." It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that there really appear to be only two approaches in this country for strengthening and developing the Canadian economy, I would suggest: the philosophy which underpins the approach of the Conservatives and the Liberal Government, "Let the private sector do it all", and the approach which the NDP is advocating, that there be some consistent, rigorous long-term planning for regions of this country and that there be a partnership between the private sector and the Government. Certainly that kind of approach is going to be far more effective and constructive in Atlantic Canada than those we have had to date. Let the record speak for itself. After decades of Liberal Government, Atlantic Canada still has the highest rate of unemployment in this country. That region still suffers from enormous difficulties in obtaining a stable and developing economy. Unfortunately, over that period of time it has also been subjected to difficulties with Conservative provincial Governments.

● (1440)

To pursue this philosophical approach a little further, Mr. Speaker, it was reported that a former Leader of the Conservative Party, during his swan song at a convention which elected the current former Conservative Leader, had said that anyone who suggests the Conservative Party is different from the Liberal Party is doing the Conservative Party a great disservice. He said those two Parties believed in the same thing, that the Liberal Party was basically incompetent and the Conservatives would do it better. Now, I do not take exception to that because the fruits of the efforts of the Liberal Government indicate tremendous incompetence, a small piece of which we were just discussing this afternoon. But certainly the Conservative Party has not had a great track record. There was R. B. Bennett as Prime Minister decades ago, and the former Member for Prince Albert and his Government which proved itself incapable of developing an approach in this country which worked. Certainly the current former Leader of the Conservative Party did not demonstrate, when in power, a great competence for handling the very serious problems of this country.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): We will never have the chance to judge you.

Mr. Skelly: The Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton says he will never have the chance to judge us.

Mr. Evans: That is true.

Mr. Skelly: We will see, when the people get fed up with the failures of those two Parties. What we may require is a new approach—

Mr. Shields: The Liberal Party West is speaking.

Mr. Skelly: Both Parties seem to be rather unified in their approach, Mr. Speaker. Nevertheless, the problem we are discussing today is the approach to economic recovery in Atlantic Canada. In its philosophical and policy approach to this problem, the New Democratic Party would adopt on a long-term basis the approach outlined in this motion. The Party's record in election campaigns is very consistent. The Government of Canada must adopt a full employment policy. There just has to be a policy put in force by law in which targets are delineated, goals set and a commitment made to full employment. Unfortunately, we do not have a Government in power which believes that that can or should be done. Nor do we have an Official Opposition which believes it can or should be done. Until they take that kind of policy approach, it will not be done and Atlantic Canada will continue to have the highest unemployment rates in this country.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You have a Government in Saskatchewan which takes that approach.

Mr. Skelly: The next item, of course, is tax reform. This Party has talked at great length about tax reform, and I have to laugh at the efforts of a very prominent Member from