

*Government Orders*

Now is the time for the government, all members of the House and all other Canadians to work together. We have to continue to build confidence in our people and confidence in business and industry. They are the people who will create jobs in the future. Since February 22, the date the budget was brought down, that has been certainly brought forward to the people in my constituency and many other constituencies across the country. A new and modern Canada will see an opportunity for young people. This plan will bring back hope to Canadians, hope for their futures and the futures of their families.

During the recent break we had a couple of weeks ago I had an opportunity to meet with many people across my constituency in public meetings. Their comments were very positive. They were saying: "You are on the right track. Keep going in that direction. It is a good balance. It is a balanced budget. We think we can make it work". They had the confidence we want to see.

On arriving in Ottawa I am sure everyone in the House, especially the new members, had heard about our perks. One of the first things the government did was to look at the so-called perks. I have never had an opportunity to use low priced shoe shine outlets or to have low priced haircuts. Maybe that is obvious today. I have never had the opportunity to have free gymnasium workouts or masseurs. That was one of the things the government said first and foremost would be gone with one mighty slash.

In comparison to a projected \$46 billion deficit, \$5 million may not sound like much but to me \$5 million is a lot of money. To my constituents \$5 million is a lot of money. I believe to most Canadians \$5 million is a lot of money. That is the amount the action of eliminating those perks is projected to save Canadian taxpayers during the next year. There is a lot more to be done, no question about that, but we have to continue moving forward with input and consultation with the citizens of the country. When we start working together that is when we start making accomplishments, that is when we start getting action and that is when we start building an economy and getting people back to work.

• (1300)

I am not embarrassed by the fact that every decision the government has made is based on creating the opportunity for jobs. I am proud of the Minister of Finance and proud of this government. I am proud to continue working with this government toward that goal.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today on this bill and I will vote against it. This bill is a good example of why Canada does not work.

Look at this morning's figures. I think that, instead of "jobs, jobs, jobs," their party's election slogan should have been

"welfare, welfare, welfare." In Newfoundland, the higher eligibility standards will throw 1,635 more people on welfare, while the reduced maximum number of weeks of benefits will increase welfare rolls by 1,370. In New Brunswick, welfare rolls will grow by 1,165 because of the higher eligibility requirements and by 1,335 because of the reduced maximum period of benefits.

I would have expected government members representing ridings in these two provinces to rise and tell us that it does not make sense, that this is totally at odds with what their party said during the election campaign. This would have allowed the government to come to its senses and stop sending misleading messages.

We are telling people that the economy is stalled, to be even more cautious, to avoid consuming more, to be careful. We act in a way that will make more people go on welfare, consume less, and contribute less to the economy. We kill off the weak recovery our society may be experiencing. It is a strange message to give to Quebec and Canada, to Quebecers and Canadians.

In their previous speeches, government members told us there was a free debate on the budget, that opposition parties could make suggestions. Good, I think that is the purpose of the House of Commons! That is not the problem, the problem is that our suggestions are not acted on. Every time we propose job creation programs to kick-start the economy and make people proud to earn a living, they come up with measures such as this legislation; it will only put more people on unemployment insurance.

When I say that this bill is an example of why Canada does not work, it is because the people cut off from UI benefits will no longer have access to training programs linked to unemployment insurance. In that sense, it is linked to one of the fundamental problems with this system, namely its inefficiency when the federal government lacks the will to co-operate with the provinces.

The minister of Human Resources Development told us that youth employment was the priority. Now he is surprised that the opposition raises the need to respect the wishes of the provinces in that area. The minister should be the first to know—I would say this is a very important quality in a minister—that, if you want to get somewhere, the co-operation of the people you are working with is essential. The only indication he has given was to the effect that he wanted to bulldoze the issue. The reform he had in mind was one that would override the wishes of Quebec in the area of manpower.

What he did not bargain for, though—and it must have taught him a good lesson—was to see the governing federalists in Quebec, who can hardly be called "big bad separatists", pass a unanimous motion in the National Assembly yesterday. Here is what it said: