

The Budget—Mr. Crofton

astonishing betrayal of the trust which was placed in the Government by Canadians last fall.

It is a gutless Budget. It is ruthless. It is a heartless assault on the weak, the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, the disadvantaged, middle-income earners and average Canadian families across the entire country. The average Canadian is being hit to put money into the hands of the rich and powerful.

There is no agenda for growth. In fact, the Budget is anti-growth, anti-family, anti-youth, anti-women, anti-senior citizens, against the regions of the country and anti-research. There are no jobs available in the steel and automobile industries. There is not a single word about mining. There is nothing for forestry or housing. There is nothing for tourism, and there is virtually nothing for agriculture or fishing. There is only the vague expectation of the Minister of Finance that somehow, out of the goodness of their hearts, the corporate sector will invest a bit more and create a few more jobs, but the Minister will not say how. He will not say it because he does not know. His incentives are not targeted to achieve that result.

That is why we in the Liberal Party have no confidence in the Budget. It presents a vision of Canada which we do not share. It is a vision of Canada which denies the contribution of the elderly. It is a vision of Canada which denies equality to every individual in every region. It is a vision of Canada which says that the poor are not worthy of our compassion. It is a vision of Canada which denies the social contract. It is not a Budget of hope. It is a Budget of despair. It is a Budget which we cannot support. We will continue to condemn the Budget from one end of the country to the other.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Patrick Crofton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to participate in the budget debate. Although, Mr. Speaker, you have been kind enough to recognize me on various occasions to permit me to comment and make observations on matters before the House, my remarks today constitute my maiden speech.

It will thus come as no surprise if I digress briefly from the important budget debate to make several comments about my riding of Esquimalt-Saanich, which I have the great honour and privilege to represent in the House. Some Members who are present, having been here awhile, will remember several of my predecessors—the Hon. George Pearkes, P.C., and holder of the Victoria Cross; George Chatterton and Donald Munro. I know my distinguished predecessor, Don Munro, would want me to extend his felicitations to his many friends and former colleagues on both sides of the House.

Where, one might ask, is Esquimalt-Saanich? It is on southern Vancouver Island, adjacent to the riding of Victoria. It has a population of 115,000. Its make-up is diverse. Esquimalt includes our western naval base and Work Point Barracks, the home of the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry. The Saanich Peninsula includes rich farmland and a growing scientific community. We share a major university and community college with the riding of Victoria. Thanks to our temperate climate, we have a large

number of retired residents. Given the immense natural beauty of Vancouver Island, the mild climate and the ocean as a doorstep, it is not surprising that tourism is a major industry.

Greater Victoria, which includes my riding, is the sports capital of Canada. We have produced a long procession of national championship teams in basketball, soccer, lacrosse, softball and field hockey. The heart of our Gold Medal Olympic Rowing Team lives and trains in my riding. Many Canadians will be surprised to learn that we even won the Stanley Cup a few years ago. Sports flourish across the full range of age groups and areas of endeavour. It is truly a favoured land. Some have called it a Garden of Eden.

Thus far, I have been describing the physical aspects of my constituency. The economic situation is not so happy a story. Unemployment is at 15 per cent in the greater Victoria area. Energy prices are high. Small business has been depressed. Tourism has been down and mills have been closed. Young and old alike have suffered.

The first tentative signs of economic recovery are showing. As a province heavily dependent on resource industries, we in British Columbia require stable markets, affordable wage scales and responsible federal Government fiscal management for business to flourish. Until recently, these necessary ingredients have been missing.

● (1650)

Initiatives taken by the new Progressive Conservative Government beginning last September have helped to start the turnaround, not just in British Columbia but right across our nation. The Budget introduced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) is an important milestone in this process of economic renewal. Hon. Members opposite are attempting to portray this Budget as some isolated incident which is unrelated to the legislative program which began last autumn and which will continue over the months and years ahead. They could not be more mistaken, Mr. Speaker.

We began with the economic statement in early November, followed by the First Ministers' conference in Regina, the conference in Quebec and the economic conference here in Ottawa. Overlaying and connecting all of these events has been the extensive and unprecedented consultation between the new federal Government and all of the provincial administrations. Many other important legislative initiatives have been taken since November which have inspired Canadians from coast to coast. This is an ongoing process and there is much more important legislation to come.

This budget, very significant though it is, is not the end of the battle to make sense out of the nonsense we inherited. Indeed, this is barely the "end of the beginning", to paraphrase the words of that great Englishman, Sir Winston Churchill.

What do British Columbians in general, and my constituents in particular, think of this Budget and the approach of this Government? They like it very much, indeed, Mr. Speaker. It begins with that very basic of requirements, attitude. We are the first federal administration in a long while which has