

The Budget

lot of influence on governments, interest rates, etc.? This obviously affects people earning low wages and farmers who need to borrow large amounts and it will affect students more and more because in the future they will have to borrow at least twice the amount that they currently need to pursue graduate studies.

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette—Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech made by the hon. member for Lévis. First of all, I found it most interesting that he was defending the status quo, and Canadian federalism, when he indicated that he hoped that there would be no social program reforms, that he was a member of the parliamentary team which toured Canada, and that he had heard various comments regarding the reforms proposed by the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The member defended ardently and with great enthusiasm Canadian federalism and the status quo while the Liberal government has realized that, at the international level, things are evolving, and quite naturally so. As Liberals, we want to make sure that the future of Canadians, including Quebecers, will be much more promising than now.

I would also like to mention that Quebecers understand perfectly that the changes brought upon by this government are necessary to the future well-being of their children. I refer our colleague, the member for Lévis to a documentary, a survey conducted in Quebec, on the quality of instruction in the CEGEPs, which, after all, are the responsibility of the Quebec government. The results are not too encouraging for young people. I believe, therefore, that we should start putting our own house in order.

Mr. Dubé: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Madawaska—Victoria, especially for her easy victory over the former minister of unemployment insurance cuts. We will not mention his name, but I want to congratulate her for that. However, she does not get so much praise for her inconsistency last year, when the first budget of her government was handed down and she supported cuts similar to those proposed by the member she helped to defeat.

However, as far as the status quo goes, we do not want any part of it. She misunderstood what I said at the end of my speech. We said that the federal government should mind its own business in the area of post-secondary education, respect areas of jurisdiction and transfer tax points because it is making expenditures in other sectors of education in Quebec. It should do what all the members of the National Assembly of Quebec are asking, even the Liberals.

[English]

Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Wellington—Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join in the budget debate. The budget was the defining moment in Canada

to develop a new direction in its financial dealings and also a new direction in the way the government does business with its people.

The budget was coherent. It had integrity and a sense of purpose. Every feature presented to us met all three of those features, coherence, integrity and purpose.

The overriding goal of this government since the day it took power has been jobs and growth. We believe good economics and good social policy are one and the same thing. In the most fundamental way good social policy begins with a good job.

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We believe a country that continues to care for its citizens must be a country that can pay its bills. We must respond to the challenges of our time. We must adapt to the new economy, the new infrastructure based on ideas and innovation. The very nature of government must change. We must develop a new notion of responsibility. The time has long passed when governments can or should do everything.

Several major things have happened. The world economy has become truly integrated. We must think globally. Trade barriers have been brought down. Communications are instant and transportation is swift. Markets never sleep. There are no longer any islands. Like it or not, there is no place to hide.

Since 1984 our debts have risen by three times. Compound interest is gobbling us up a second at a time. The government has a two track approach, sustained and sustainable economic growth. Growing economies produce jobs. Economies that are not growing produce no jobs. The key to growth is productivity. Productivity is about how well ideas, workers, resources and investment are brought together in a country's economy. Productivity is about ingenuity, better management and paying attention to the common sense of our workers.

High productivity growth increases income. How do we do it? We must improve our skills. We must have better innovation. We must provide a welcoming climate for investment. We must remove disincentives that we have created for people and for businesses. We must get our fiscal house in order.

This budget's plan for action introduces far reaching action to restore the fiscal health essential for a strong, growing economy. The budget will fundamentally reform what government does and how. It will bring permanent change in the way government does business. The objective is to get government right so it can fill its social and economic mandates and be more effective and sustainable will include deep cuts in the level of federal program spending, not simply lower spending growth, but substantial reduction in actual dollars.

One of the things that gives this government integrity is that its plans have been prudent and it has met its targets. The budget actions have delivered on this government's commitment to