

The Budget

all the people who supported me, those who worked with me in my campaign and ensured my victory.

• (1130)

The human element was the most important factor in my campaign. Because of the nature of Vancouver East, I asked to speak to the budget which contains much of what is needed in a riding like Vancouver East. This was the new government's first budget and was a blueprint of the red book that got the Liberal Party elected.

This budget is the first step of this new government to bring back dignity to our population by creating jobs and restoring faith in government. However, let me speak to some of the important issues for Vancouver East and for Canada.

No tax increases. What a challenge. A fairer use of UIC and lower UIC premiums, giving businesses a chance to reinvest the premium money they save in creating more jobs. This was another challenge and this time it came from the business people.

The support for housing through the RRAP, the continuation of subsidies to the needy on reserve housing, projects to help victims of family violence and the use of RRSP for first house purchases. We would like to see more funding for new subsidized housing but I feel we must become innovative and find private funding as well to be able to continue a subsidized housing system which is the envy of the world.

The infrastructure program for the present and future of our transportation network and of tourism. The prenatal nutrition and the aboriginal head start programs are two very important programs for our newborns. The court challenges program and the establishment of the Canadian race relations committee needed for all minorities.

The centre of excellence for women's health and the national forum on health are two very important initiatives for the prevention of illnesses. The youth services corps, the youth internship program, the literacy programs to help our youth become independent and start their lives. The unification of families during the year of the family.

[Translation]

All that was done by the Minister of Finance with the advice and support of government members. The Minister of Finance took into account the requests made by Canadians and often changed the course of his budget according to the advice given to him by his colleagues.

The Minister of Finance also considered the fact that, next year, we will have the results of the consultations that will be held in the areas of defence, human resources and immigration. I

think that this budget is a very good example of the government's determination to change course.

[English]

What I feel is so important is the slight shift of the work burden from the government to the business sector. We have been counting for too long on the government for our jobs. By offering incentives to businesses, the Minister of Finance is beginning to give the business sector a chance of expanding and creating more jobs. Even the change in UIC is a good step toward creating more commitment on the part of the worker.

During the campaign many single mothers living in my riding called. They want to get off welfare, get some training and start working. This is the answer to their requests.

As a woman, I am quite happy to see that for the first time women's needs are reflected in the budget. I am sure this is the beginning of something.

Sure we would like to see more funding for various programs, but unfortunately due to our financial constraints we all have to share the burden and co-operate. Sure we would like to see a much lower deficit forecast, but this cannot be done without the suffering of all Canadians who are asking for jobs.

Mark Hill, an Ottawa writer, has tried to get rid of the deficit and the debt, but after much general cutting, after: "slashing old age security, unemployment insurance, health care, social assistance and education by 25 per cent", and this on top of what he has already cut, he has concluded by writing: "what if we allowed our elderly to fall into poverty, our sick to go without treatment and our poor to go without decent food or shelter? How many years would we have to suffer after we paid off our debt"? The answer is 22 years of suffering.

[Translation]

In conclusion, I would like to bring up an issue that troubles me a great deal. In 1976, I took part in various initiatives aimed at keeping Quebec within Canada. When I arrived in this country in 1966, Quebec was part of Canada and it must stay that way.

• (1135)

I want to offer my assistance to Quebec members who want a united Canada and who would like the support of a Canadian of Italian origin, from Western Canada, who speaks French and who is interested in keeping Canada together.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Permit me to congratulate the hon. member on her maiden speech.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I too congratulate the hon. member on her maiden speech. As I have said before, that is a very special moment in our political life in this House. I do congratulate the hon. member.