

The Budget—Ms. K. Campbell

FERMI II NUCLEAR PLANT

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the petition which I would like to present this morning, and which has been certified, comes from approximately 500 people in the constituencies throughout Essex County and the City of Windsor.

The petition notes that just a few kilometres from our border the Fermi II nuclear plant is continuing to operate. It continues to pose a clear danger to lives and to property in our part of the country because of the "abysmal record of accidents at the plant".

The petitioners therefore call on our Government to take as strong action as possible to push the United States Government to accept an independent review process which will ensure that this plant is assessed fairly, to see if it is safe for the future.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Pierre H. Vincent (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall all questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from Monday, May 8, 1989, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government, and the amendment of Mr. MacLaren:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefore:

"this House regrets that the Government has imposed unfair taxes and has cut vital programs, including child care, regional development and agriculture, in an effort to reduce its annual deficit, despite the fact that this effort has been rendered futile by the Government's ill-conceived high interest rate policy; and

That this House condemns the Government for pursuing these policies that fall most onerously upon lower and middle-income Canadians and that are certain to hinder the further development of the Canadian economy."

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the debate on one of the most important functions of government, that is to create a fiscal plan, a budget whereby the Government can function for the coming year and whereby we can ensure the continued prosperity of all Canadians.

As Canadians, we have a serious problem. It is our large and growing national debt. The national debt is growing by \$3 million an hour. By this time tomorrow the debt will be larger by more than \$80 million. In just two weeks it will have grown by more than \$1 billion.

The interest payments on the debt are also increasing rapidly. Only 20 years ago, just 12 cents of every dollar the taxpayer sent to Ottawa went to interest payments. When this Government came to power four and a half years ago, that figure had already increased to 32 cents. This year it is over 35 cents.

The debt is a major obstacle to building the kind of future we all want for ourselves and for our children. In the House yesterday, the Member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca (Mr. Barrett) talked about the Budget and said that it did not say anything about food banks, that the Budget did not say anything about poor people in Canada. I think the Budget deals directly with the problems of poverty and the disadvantaged in Canadian society.

Unlike the New Democratic Party, our Government does not view Canadians as victims and does not see it as being the role of government to perpetuate weakness and dependency. Our Government sees the role of government in Canadian society to strengthen individuals, to strengthen people in their communities, to give them the wherewithal to stand on their own two feet. Without careful fiscal planning that addresses the fundamental problems of poverty, the problems of unemployment, the problems of training, these goals cannot be achieved for Canadian society.

Without addressing the problems of public debt, the Government of Canada cannot address the question of income disparity in Canadian society. The Government of Canada cannot provide training for Canadian workers who are displaced by technological change or other shifts