

The Budget—Mr. Murphy

We pay twice as much for foreign oil and development of foreign wells as we pay for Canadian energy to create Canadian wealth. My friends opposite have created a hopeless climate throughout this land and it is rather sad to see. The hon. member over there may smile, but let him look at the polls and he will find that one in four Albertans wishes to separate from Canada. It breaks my heart to see something like this develop. It is developing simply because of the attitude of hon. members opposite.

I promised hon. members to my left that I would keep my comments very brief. Let me just leave you with a few thoughts, Mr. Speaker. I should like to reiterate that the majority of us want to stay as part of this country and the majority of us wish to contribute to this country, but if the continuous policy of the government opposite is to push us out of confederation, what will happen to this country is obvious. I love Canada and I love Alberta, but the government opposite is depriving me of the opportunity to contribute to both. I cannot help but be sad when I witness the policies being implemented by this Liberal regime.

Let me conclude on a lighter note which I should like to share with hon. members opposite. What we will do in Alberta is to erect a statue of the Prime Minister. We believe it will provide shade in the summer, shelter in the winter, and allow the sparrows to speak for all Albertans.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, like some of my colleagues, I too, welcome the opportunity to speak on the budget. I cannot support the proposals outlined by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), because he has failed to perform the duty of providing economic leadership to Canada or to any of its regions. Other members of Parliament have criticized this budget and I concur with that criticism. This budget is full of politics but it is silly putty when it comes to economics. It ignores the need for comprehensive social programs.

Whether I choose to speak as the member for Churchill, as the chairman of our Atlantic committee or as an individual Canadian, I cannot believe that this budget will solve the problems facing this nation. As the hon. member for Churchill I represent a constituency containing two-thirds of the land mass of Manitoba. There are a number of native communities where unemployment exceeds 80 per cent, white communities with youths and women who lack trade and skills training, yet the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) is talking about importing 30,000 skilled workmen. As a representative of the people of northern Manitoba, I cannot support a budget which does nothing for these native people, for women and young people.

We are told there will be a 22 per cent increase in the economic envelope, whatever that means. Mr. Speaker, we do not know what that money will be used for. Past government performance would indicate that we got another grab bag of hit and miss programs and unemployment programs which will offer nothing substantial to Canadians who really need help and which will do nothing to meet the drastic shortage of skilled trades people. We were introduced in this budget to a

program which in effect will be a slush fund for revitalizing the Liberal party in western Canada. That goal is as likely to be achieved as the return of the dinosaurs which once roamed the riding of the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor). The Liberals are dinosaurs when it comes to western Canada; they are extinct and will remain so.

● (2120)

The western development fund is advertised as being worth \$4 billion, but on examination it is only a commitment for \$2 billion over the next three years. The Minister of Finance has described this program as some kind of retribution for the grab on western resources. In its own Liberal way it is of little substance, it shows little planning, and consequently it will do little to diversify the economy of the western provinces. This fund may be used to effect some transportation improvements. It may actually provide funds for that great Liberal election promise of double-tracking, suitably subtitled "there and back again". But it will do little for the people of western Canada.

There is need for western economic growth, diversification, and programs to assist native people and others in regions which do not have huge granaries and oil drills sitting in their backyard. But this will not happen unless the Liberal government starts planning and stops playing regional politics.

I am concerned about the effect of the budget on the over-all Canadian economy, on the individual Canadian family, and on the underdeveloped regions of this country, in particular the Atlantic provinces to which I will address my next few remarks. The Atlantic region has always been hit the hardest by measures decided in Ottawa. When prices are high, they are higher in the Atlantic provinces. When wages are low, they are lower in that region. When there are few jobs, there are still fewer jobs in the Atlantic region. This has become a Canadian fact of life. So it is of little surprise to me, although I expected a little more from a minister of finance who comes from Cape Breton, to find that the Atlantic provinces will once more get it in the teeth because of the federal budget of a week ago.

I said I expected more from the Minister of Finance because he is a home-grown boy from the region, but after all there is another side to the story. He is a Liberal Minister of Finance and for the last 20 years his party has done nothing to help the people of that region. It has done nothing to remove the regional disparities which exist in the country.

Perhaps one problem of the Minister of Finance is that he does not look beyond his statistics, charts, numbers, forecasts and profiles to see what the lack of planning has done to the average Canadian. For example, would he forecast that this will be the highest rate of unemployment since the great depression? I wonder what the word "unemployment" means to the minister. Is the word nothing more to him than cold hard statistics? Does it have a magical effect on his heart and his mind, or does it turn him away from the problems facing Canadians? Is unemployment becoming a term synonymous with participation rates, seasonally adjusted rates, numbered regions, or does he see beyond all that? Does he see that the