

The Budget—Mr. Malépart

abolished by this Government, nothing to replace any program; no action in favour of the farmers, the remote areas or anybody. But yes, there is something for the rich and the Tories, the only people with an opportunity to take advantage of the system and the generosity of this party.

Personally, I firmly believe that the Government could have taken some initiatives. While reducing the deficit, it could have first, instead of postponing the fiscal reform and the introduction of a monthly or annual guaranteed income, the government could have, as of today, with all the information already available, published documents at the same time for the purposes of consultation and review. What is being done? Contrary to the promise of the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, nothing has been introduced. Nobody has answered. Are these delays scandal-related? Is it a dissension in Cabinet that delays the long-awaited fiscal reform to mitigate the injustice of the tax system for the average family in comparison with corporations? Everything has been delayed. Is there a dissension in Cabinet or in the caucus? Nobody has answered that question. Why does the Conservative Government not table immediately all documents concerning an open, sincere and honest consultation on tax reform?

Here are the questions we should ask about tax reform: Should we, as the Government did, keep the capital gains exemption which, I repeat, benefits only the rich? And it was even said that capital gains made outside of the country mean an income tax decrease in Canada and thus, translate into a tax increase for the middle income earners. When is the Government going to stop bleeding them dry? Before they have splipped their pay cheque into their pocket, the Government has already taken it back. Before you have time to slip it into your pocket, the Government, that is Michael and Brian, cut it in half. You have not even got that time! In the good old days, you could put it in your pocket, get home, get it out and pay your income tax. But not anymore! These days, the working man is seen as no more than a thief. No sooner has the boss given him his pay cheque than some Conservative pops up saying: "Hang on. Half of that is mine, just the rest is yours."

Shame, Mr. Speaker. The middle class has had it with this. In short, they are fed up. The minister says: "Corporations, we cannot change that, we will give them the scare, so they do not pay income taxes. But we do not scare individual taxpayers. We just hit them with all we have got." I understand the minister of Finance. All his buddies are rich people. They are not like the people I know. His friends told him to save their money bags. What the people I know back home are saying is: Help us survive. Let us live. All we are asking for is our fair share. But the minister of Finance has buddies who want their money bags saved. So far he has done a lot to oblige his money toting buddies, his friends in Canada who are rich. No wonder you rate 22 percent. There are scandals and there are scandals but no fraud or trickery is worse than what you are doing to the middle class. Those people are wondering—at this very moment, the workers in the labour force who are in their

forties are wondering what will happen when they retire, whether or not there will be any money left in the till for them.

The time was ripe for reform, for a real reform in the area of pensions. The time was ripe for making sure that private pension plans were indexed, to improve . . . Governments have already increased contributions to the Quebec Pension Plan and the Canada Pension Plan. But what people need are benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time has expired. One could talk for hours trying to bring this Government to understand and ponder but, after two and a half years, I have come to the conclusion, which is supported by public opinion, that it is no use, that they understand nothing, that all they care about is getting rich and catering to the rich.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Champagne (Champlain)) for a question or a comment.

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): No, Mr. Speaker, it is on debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any questions or comments on the speech of the Hon. Member for Montreal—Saint-Marie (Mr. Malépart)? If not, debate will continue with the Parliamentary Secretary—

● (1620)

[English]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to take part in this important debate and to support the budget of my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson).

[English]

This is a Budget that consolidates and extends the progress we have made in restoring the health of the nation's finances. It is a Budget that reaffirms the Government's commitment to carry through with a comprehensive program of action to strengthen the job-creating capacity of the Canadian economy.

The constituents in my riding of London West, like all Canadians, are pleased and confident that the economy is being well managed. That is important in my riding and I know it is important in all ridings across the country. The people are very happy to see the progress the Government is making.

This Budget points the way to a further major step in our program. It is absolutely historic that what is being proposed is a comprehensive reform of the nation's tax system. Today we have heard many suggestions from Hon. Members opposite on how the tax system can be improved. That, of course, is the next chapter.