

Borrowing Authority

In several regions of this country, the unemployment rate has reached unacceptable levels. This is true even in Quebec where youth unemployment rate reaches 13.7 per cent. Nothing could justify the Government's inaction.

The failure of the Tory Government over the past few years to take advantage of the economic stability makes one really concerned about what could happen in case of a recession or even economic stagnation in this country. Unfortunately, young people are always the first victims in similar circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I worry about what the future has in store for young Canadians under this free trade agreement with our American partners. As a strong believer in the entrepreneurship of our young people, I hope that the Government will set up the necessary mechanism for them to rank among the giants and the strong. I also wonder about their working conditions in such a competitive economy because Canadian corporations will have to make cuts somewhere if they want to hold their own. Clearly young Canadians are likely to be the first victims of these cuts.

The Government should consider now taking special measures to prepare young people for this new environment, failing which they would be quickly overwhelmed under a wave of Americanism.

Unfortunately, the Canadian Government is not moving in this direction, and no one, not even the Minister of State for Youth, is truly concerned about young people. The optimism shown by this Government often blinds it to the obvious.

In his Budget speech, the Minister of Finance patted himself on the back because of the unexpected performance of the economy. But a reference to his 1984 speech shows that he talked about reducing the expenditures without increasing taxes.

And here is what Alain Dubuc has to say about the recent Budget by the Minister of Finance: "His Budget has only thirteen and a half pages and twelve of them are in praise of the Conservative Government, which makes it look like a political leaflet meant for door to door delivery."

And among other considerations by Alain Dubuc, here is a quote on "opportunities foregone" by the Conservative Government: "It is all the more worrisome that the Conservative Government has come to power at an ideal time to put public finances in order. Canada has had five consecutive years of economic growth so there could hardly be a better time to reduce the deficit."

Why has it not been done? Surely not because the Minister of Finance is incompetent, but rather because he is part of a Government afraid of its own shadow."

The improvement in our economic situation is due in great part to the fact that for the last six years now, the entire world has been recovering from a very deep recession. The Conservative Government has benefited from the strong bases put in place by its predecessor, which had successfully handled a very

difficult recession. Furthermore, both the Government and the economy are benefiting from an increase in consumption. In the past, Canadians saved more while now they consume more.

Nevertheless, the last Budget is off the mark in many respects. The deficit is handled in a dishonest way. No aid is provided to the neediest, Canadians are expected to bear a greater tax burden and, finally, forecasts concerning the Canadian economy are not realistic.

In fact, the forecasts made by the Finance Department are so optimistic that they must be taken with a grain of salt. There is enormous exaggeration.

The great majority of economists are much more cautious. Unfortunately, those who foot the bill in times of economic downturn are the neediest among Canadians. Our young people are also constantly vulnerable.

• (1640)

They are the first ones to suffer when the number of jobs decreases and when cuts are made in programs.

Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have shown clearly their government is not trustworthy. They made commitments they did not fulfil. Those commitments were important for Canada. We were promised taxes would not be raised, the deficit would be reduced. Three years and a half later, we realize Canadians are taxed to a very high degree and the deficit has not changed significantly. Still claims are made at every opportunity that everything is just fine. The documents about 18 inches thick that are distributed say nothing but give a boastful and inaccurate description of the Government's achievements. This budget is an electioneering document printed at taxpayers' expense that is certainly not very honest.

In spite of this situation, Madam Speaker, and I am concluding, we are asked to give the Government a borrowing power of \$25.3 billion. If that money could be used to help the needy and young Canadians, I would go along with the request thinking the Government is willing to make up for what has been lost. But that is not the case. I do not want to delay too much the passing of the Bill, but I am against it, since it does not bring anything better for Canadian men and women and for young people and it is tangible proof of this Government's very bad management.

Madam Speaker, the people have every reason to worry and fear the terrible situation in which Conservatives have put Canada, in spite of all the economic advantages which could accrue to Canadians. Personally I am deeply disappointed, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tardif (Richmond—Wolfe): Madam Speaker, I would like, first of all, to congratulate my colleague for his very precise speech which, in my view, is very important as it brings to this House an element which unfortunately, up to now, had not been mentioned often enough, and that is the fact that our friends opposite are bragging about low inflation rates and low