

Supply

The number of people who say that they want to impeach the Prime Minister defies description. The number of people who come up to us and say: "We voted Conservative last time. Never again." defies description.

An hon. member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langdon: There is in this country a tremendous, devastating absence of confidence in our national government at a time when we face an economic crisis of increasing magnitude. I have to say as a member of Parliament that that is something I feel very sad about.

I wish that this government in this budget that it brought down just two weeks ago had given to Canadians a budget of hope, a budget which would have given Canadians a sense that this government had finally started to listen to the Canadian people and had started to say: yes, we must deal with the recession. Yes, we must deal with the unemployed. Yes, we must deal with the tremendous sense of deprivation which many farmers are feeling across this country. Yes, we must deal with the tremendous sense of unfairness that many aboriginal Canadians feel. Yes, we must deal with the problems of unity which are there in our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I think it is very difficult to understand a Budget that talks about national unity but, when it comes down to it, does nothing for the unemployed in the province of Quebec. We can read the Budget from cover to cover, trying to find something for the unemployed, but there is nothing. There is no response to the economic needs of the province of Quebec.

• (1540)

Mr. Speaker, I think this is very sad when we consider the threat to the unity of this country.

[*English*]

We saw on Friday the realities of the recession brought very much to light for people across this country with the release of the unemployment statistics for February. When the government brought in its budget on February 26, it claimed that it was responding and that it saw ahead the chances of recovery. Yet the unemployment figures for February is the first sign of what is happening

to the economy in the month of February. It is the first sign that has come out.

Those unemployment figures were devastating: an increase in unemployment from 9.7 per cent to 10.2 per cent, a jump of one-half a percentage point. That is thousands and thousands of people; 77,000 people across this country have lost their jobs. In the last year, 430,000 permanent jobs were lost in this country as a result of the policies of this government. That kind of tragedy is especially grim in my own province of Ontario, my own city of Windsor, where in my constituency we have seen unemployment go well above 13 per cent and 14 per cent.

What is tragic is that it is not just something that is hitting the manufacturing sector of Ontario, as perhaps this motion by the Liberal Party might suggest. This is instead a devastating attack on unemployed people, on workers, on fishermen, on farmers. We can see across the country unemployment figures that just leave us close to tears.

We can see in St. John's, Newfoundland 12.5 per cent unemployed. In the province of Newfoundland itself a total of 18.2 per cent unemployed; in the province of Quebec, 12.1 per cent unemployed; and in the province of British Columbia, 9.9 per cent unemployed. That compared to Ontario where it is 9.5 per cent unemployed.

Those are just statistics, but we have met some of the people behind those statistics as we have gone across the country. There is a sense of despair, a sense that hope is disappearing. For the life of me I just cannot understand why this government has not been prepared to bring in a budget that says: here is the human problem and we are going to try to do something about it.

The minister who spoke just before me suggested that the government was increasing its expenditure on the unemployed. He was not correct. Because so many more people are unemployed, the government is having to spend more unemployment insurance money, but each and every single penny of that money will be paid back by the unemployed. It will be paid back by workers. It will be paid back by small businesses. The only thing that dealt with the unemployed in this budget was a \$100 million cut to the Canadian Jobs Strategy.