

Government Orders

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by saying to the member that in no way do I consider the equalization money being transferred as feel good money.

I do not believe that the Bloc Quebecois are the only people who speak for the province of Quebec. We have a provincial Liberal government right now in Quebec. The money, I believe and hope, goes into responsible publicly accounted for projects, such as retraining, education, et cetera. Please, let us not call this money feel good.

I want to say to the hon. member who comes from the province of Alberta that I realize her province is going through deep pain. So is my city and my province. However having said all of that, Quebec and some of our Atlantic provinces are even much worse off than the member's province and my province. That is something we have to realize.

As far as the \$25 million for the CBC goes, and I do not think it is receiving this money and just going out and buying frivolous things, this money goes through a very rigorous process and goes into Canadian content and new production. The hon. member talked this morning about the CBC getting more revenue.

One of the reasons why the CBC is short on revenue is that it is competing with the CTVs of the world that have much more American content. The content in terms of Canadian budget and Canadian productions is not anywhere near the budgets of programming on other networks, CTV, which basically rents its finished product from abroad. The money will be going to enhance the production of CBC programming which hopefully will raise its quality and which will ultimately make it as productive as other networks.

• (1730)

I think the member has to realize and have the good faith that the new administration of the CBC, not putting down the previous one, has assured the CRTC and members of this House that, as all of us in this country are undergoing restructuring and renewal, it does not feel that it is exempt. It is going to do its best to make sure that this money is used efficiently.

Mr. Paul Zed (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, through the course of today's debate much has been said about specific elements of this budget. I would like to take a few moments to put our discussion into context by reminding hon. members that the broad direction of the budget is one that has been described by the president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce as headed in the right direction and very specific about how to get there.

This budget addresses three vital challenges. The first is to build a framework for economic renewal. The second is to restore fiscal responsibility and the third, to ensure long term viability of our social programs.

The budget takes a balanced approach to these goals because they are the foundations for what Canada needs most, growth and jobs. This budget is the first stage in a two stage process. The direct actions taken today will be followed by extensive policy reviews leading to further action in the future.

The government has taken concrete action to meet the urgent need of creating jobs and revitalizing our economy. Canada as we all know has just passed through a difficult recession. That is why we are taking immediate action to restore consumer confidence and spur growth, action such as our national infrastructure program.

Currently in New Brunswick as in other provinces we are determining the first projects to receive funding from the \$153 million to be spent in our province over the next three years. This government has also announced strategic measures to help Canada compete and prosper in the new economy. This budget, for example, takes action to assist small and medium sized businesses, the driving force behind job creation in our fast evolving economy. Measures including reduction of regulatory and payroll tax burdens as well as improved access to capital and new technology are essential for continued growth and job creation in the new economy.

In keeping with the vision of this budget the standing committee on industry has begun a study on the access by small and medium sized business to new and traditional sources of financing. In the past weeks this committee in keeping with the government's pledge to consult with Canadians has heard testimony from small and medium sized business owners from across the country.

I am pleased to note that a number of Atlantic Canadian business people have come forward to give excellent testimony on this very important subject. Small business people know how hard it is to get a modest loan and this committee wants to see how the government can help.

The budget takes decisive action to bring the deficit down now and set the country on a realistic path toward a responsible target of 3 per cent of the GDP in three years, a target that no Canadian government has reached for 20 years. We will accomplish this mainly from expenditure reductions. In this area this government is leading by example.

Bill C-17, for example, freezes the salaries of members of Parliament. Over the next three years net savings from all spending cuts will reach \$17 billion. This represents the most extensive program of net spending reduction of any budget in more than a decade.

• (1735)

We still have work to do. Even with last week's encouraging news of the largest monthly decline in the unemployment rate in 10 years, we still have too many Canadians out of work. We have an economy where one in six children lives in poverty and where social programs that were once the envy of the world no longer