

The Budget—Mr. Rynard

ter of Finance raised taxes, not lowered them, and this policy has been a dismal failure.

If income tax is cut, pressure is taken off wage demands. If corporation tax were cut, there would be money for expansion and goods would become more competitive in the marketplace. It would give the people back their own businesses. Yesterday I attended the election of a warden in one of the biggest counties in the Dominion of Canada. One of the speakers said it was about time government was given back to the people, because the people knew when money was getting scarce and made the necessary adjustments; the people knew how to handle it.

I want to dwell for a moment on the subject of regional government. I know of an industry that wants to build a factory under the government's incentive legislation but cannot afford to do so because in this area there are no incentives and taxes have been too high. There is just not enough money left over from business activities to build and expand. The government should offer assistance in the building of this factory because it would create employment. Instead, regional government is running wild and we have a sort of balance of payments between the various provinces—in effect, a stabilization fund.

Since the government's guidelines have been unsuccessful and have only depleted profits, I suggest the government should use public funds to create public works. One of the suggestions made yesterday at the County of Simcoe's meeting was to establish a work program directed toward the removal of dead elm trees that stand out stark across the country. Such a program could be commenced in each province. Dozens of similar projects could be initiated.

So many people are living on fixed pensions. While the government boasts about beating inflation, I suggest they examine some of the rents these pensioners are paying. To show the House how benevolent this government is, Mr. Speaker, about two years ago they introduced the national medicare scheme across Canada. But no provision whatever was made for the poor who could not afford to pay for drugs prescribed by doctors under the medicare scheme. If that is not a national disgrace, I do not know what is. Since the government brought the program in, it should have completed the job by introducing a drug care bill, because there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country today who cannot afford to buy drugs prescribed by their doctor. Another matter of a humanitarian nature is the standard of continual care of patients in nursing homes following intensive care in hospitals. Those who are chronically ill and require nursing care receive no assistance at all from the federal government.

● (9:10 p.m.)

Those are the things I am advocating to the government today. It must show its humanitarian principles in looking after those who are unable, under present circumstances, to look after themselves and provide work wherever it can be provided. I have suggested one pro-

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ject. There are others. The government must lower taxes immediately and cut the sales tax in order that people will be able to purchase more goods. In the final analysis, the government must bring the value of the Canadian dollar down from 97 cents or 98 cents to 93 cents or 92 1/2 cents in order that we can again become more competitive in world markets and have the trading advantage that we need. Let us hope that before we have more serious problems the government will act.

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as many members have pointed out, the present level of unemployment is distressingly high. There is no disagreement on that from this side of the chamber. No one concerned about people can fail to be unhappy about the situation. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) has pointed out that there are encouraging economic indicators which show improving trends. I think that we welcome these indicators, regardless of party affiliation. There is real encouragement in our export position and we can draw heart from Canada's price performance in comparison with other trading nations.

However, I agree with hon. members in the opposition when they say that this is very small consolation to the family man who may have been working for years and been a good worker, a man with youngsters and a mortgage who is out of work through no fault of his own. Let me say, this, Mr. Speaker: I would be delinquent in my responsibility as a former member of the opposition if I did not commend the opposition for speaking out and commenting on the situation. That is their job, as much as we on this side of the House may resent some of that criticism.

Some hon. members in the opposition have presented alternative ideas, and I have marked some of them down. As in other debates, some of the ideas appear at least to some of us to have more merit than others. But ideas have been expressed during this debate and that is good. In my view, some of their statements have been unfairly critical. I agree with my minister when he said last night that psychology is important in assisting the economic readjustment we all seek. The Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) has pointed this out in many speeches across the country during the past few months and I agree with him and those who have echoed this position.

We do not need statements in Canada which seek to alarm or disconcert for purely political reasons. They render a notable disservice to our country. Hon. members opposite know, as we on this side know, that the long-term prospects for Canada are simply magnificent, regardless of present difficulties. We all know that. We need reassurance and confidence in the Canadian economy so that normal growth patterns can be restored as fully as possible. Again, I say that this does not mean the opposition has no right to criticize. Churchill said on January 27, 1940, during one of his great speeches to the House of Commons:

We do not resent the well-meant criticism of any man. We do not shrink from any fair criticism—that is the most dangerous