

The Budget—Mr. MacLaren

In yesterday's Budget we learned that this objective will be further delayed. Canada will now spend only .4 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on official development assistance. Canada will now reduce its deficit at the expense of the poorest countries, whatever the negative impact these delays and cuts will have on both developing countries and the international status of Canada.

In an interdependent world economy, poverty anywhere robs Canadians of export markets and jobs. The delays and cuts are short-sighted. If one of the richest countries of the world cannot find money during a period of prosperity to help the poorest ones, what kind of moral authority do we have, as the privileged few, to ask Brazil, Mexico, Argentina or any other country to implement social and economic reforms to help solve their problems? Democracies are fragile in those countries. The bitter pill that we are forcing upon them has already caused social disruption. Nothing good can come out of these short-sighted delays and cuts in our official development assistance.

Cuts do not only affect the developing countries. They also hurt Canada's international reputation. Official development assistance enhances Canada's bilateral and multilateral relations, while providing an effective vehicle for further expression of the humanitarian beliefs shared by all Canadians. Furthermore, the reductions announced by the Government will undermine Canada's traditional role as a middle power in multilateral forums such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and *la Francophonie*, a position already weakened by the Government's poor record in external relations and its obsession with the Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

At the beginning of this brief review of the Budget and some of its implications, I asked the Government whether it was fair to all Canadians. In an even more fundamental way, it is an unfair Budget. This Government, through its inaction over the last four prosperous years, has placed itself in a fiscal trap. It has now had to choose. It has had to show its true colours.

We can now see that the values behind this Budget are not the values of most Canadians. They express the values of a Government bent on emphasizing market forces over all other Canadian values. They help to clear

the way toward implementation of the Government's goal of economic integration with the United States.

Some Hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, in Canada the pursuit of private wealth is balanced by a widespread recognition of the public good. Canadians define themselves to a notable degree by their collective programs which they themselves have created and financed to help each other, whether individually or regionally.

During the recent election campaign, Canadians showed every sign that they do not want that sense of caring for each other to be cut in the name of harmonization with the United States. Yet here we have a Government that in its deficit-reduction measures is moving Canada further along a path paralleling that of the United States.

That is what we Liberals meant when we spoke of erosion of sovereignty. Such harmonization with the United States is not the goal of most Canadians. They want their Government's priorities to be on the environment, on the value of a compassionate society, on safe and well run towns and cities, on the promotion of Canadian culture, on a well educated citizenry, and on equal justice for all.

• (1400)

Canadians will look in vain for such priorities in this negative Budget. This Budget fails the test of fairness affirming Canadian values and traditions. That is the basic reason that I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and by substituting the following therefor:

"this House regrets that the Government has imposed unfair taxes and has cut vital programs, including child care, regional development and agriculture, in an effort to reduce its annual deficit, despite the fact that this effort has been rendered futile by the Government's ill-conceived high interest rate policy; and

That this House condemns the Government for pursuing these policies that fall most heavily upon lower and middle income Canadians and that are certain to hinder the further development of the Canadian economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has heard the terms of the amendment and finds it to be in order.