

The Budget

How can we possibly take this government's commitment to competitiveness seriously when it has systematically dismantled our research and development?

Something I hear talked about a lot in my riding recently is taxes. In fact different tax coalitions have formed over the last year or so that are really keeping a watch on local and provincial governments. I am sure by next election they will be challenging Canada, all parties, as to why or where the parties stand in terms of spending tax dollars.

This government claims in this budget that there were no tax increases. We know that just two weeks before the budget was tabled a huge tax was put on all exported tobacco products, measuring about \$8 per carton of cigarettes. Why was this tax not in the budget? Clearly it is a budget area on which to put taxes. Why was it not? Either the government wanted to fool Canadians into believing that there were no tax increases, or maybe it was a little bit too embarrassed to admit in a major public forum that it was taxing exports.

Not only will that tax be devastating to many of the tobacco farmers in my area, but it will also hurt the many thousands of jobs that depend on the tobacco industry.

Just ask the 5,000 people who have lost their jobs in this industry due to the government's outrageous taxation policies in the past. Just ask the thousands of farmers who have lost their farms, or the other 9,000 people including 1,200 growers who would lose their jobs if this industry is displaced and moved to the United States.

I, for one, would like to know how the government believes that jobs can be created in such an environment and at such a cost to Canadians.

If this government cares about rural Canada and cares about its farmers, why is it cutting \$4 million from Agriculture Canada's grants and contributions preceded by previous budgetary cuts of somewhere around \$48 million and \$25 million in operating capital funds in the 1991-92 fiscal year? Is that a government that really cares about agriculture?

As has been said many times here, farmers and agriculture are the cornerstones of our economy. I know that probably every politician from a rural area in this House has said that before. But that does not mean very

much if in fact a government that says that does not back it up with financial help.

In the past farmers have resolutely accepted the increasing losses of income with external optimism unmatched anywhere else in Canada. But recently this real hope has been diminished.

Farmers are desperate. Farm families who have been dedicated to providing clean and safe foods for Canadians and people around the world are really feeling the pinch today. They have given their savings, they have given their homes, and they have given their future to a country that they love and to a country that they hoped would be there for them in their time of need.

Rural Canada is suffering. When agriculture suffers, everyone suffers and the country suffers. We in rural Canada do not believe that this budget goes anywhere near to addressing the concerns of not only farmers but also of the rest of rural Canada.

What is wrong with the budget? Despite promises made in the last budget, unemployment has increased and is expected to remain at somewhere around 10 per cent for the next two years. In other words, nothing has been done to help these millions of Canadians out of work. Certainly nothing is being done in this budget to help get Canada working again.

The budget is silent on a national child care program. In fact in this budget the government has abandoned this promise.

Important institutions like the Economic Council of Canada and the Science Council of Canada have been eliminated. Why? Because the government is tired of living in fear of an independent review of its policies.

The Co-Operative Housing Program has been eliminated, which will affect thousands of people in need of homes throughout Canada.

The increased cuts to Agriculture Canada by means of grants and contributions, as well as the excise tax placed on exported tobacco, are indications of the systematic dismantling of agriculture across this country by this government.

Finally, in my last two minutes I would like to point out that just because the federal government has not raised or introduced new taxes does not mean that Canadians will not pay more taxes.