

*The Budget*

The notion of a municipal infrastructure program proposed by the leader of the Liberal Party, the Liberal Party, the Federation of Municipalities, and by almost all of the provinces is a major proposal to invest in the infrastructure of this nation and to put some of our people back to work. That is as it should be. It should be weighed on its merits and not attacked by the tribal politics of this minister who suggests that we do not want to have a project because it means that the money from taxpayers of one region might be spent for the benefit of taxpayers in another region.

We are a nation, or we are not. We believe in sharing the resources, sharing the wealth, sharing the opportunity, sharing the potential and sharing the problems of nationhood, or we do not. It is disappointing to see a minister of the Crown who ought to know better appeal to tribal instincts as a means of attacking a worth-while project.

Why is that project so important? It is important because it was not contained in the budget. This budget has to be measured against the reality of Canada today. The minister said he was going to bring in "a realistic budget". That is the standard he established. It would be a realistic budget. That is what he told us.

What is the reality of Canada today? The reality of Canada is that there are 1.5 million Canadian citizens who have taken the trouble to register at a Canada Manpower Centre and say that they are ready, willing, able and anxious to work, that they are available for work, want to work, need to work, want the dignity of a pay cheque. However, nobody is calling. A million and a half people.

There are another 2.5 million people who have given up. They have not even registered at the Canada Manpower Centres. They have not even made an application lately. They are on welfare. Four million people either registered, are anxious, able, and actively looking for work, or have given up. That is the reality of our country today. With four million either unemployed or on welfare there are millions more—and every member of Parliament knows it—who live in fear every day that when they go to work in the morning the boss is going to tell them that their job is disappearing soon, or that they are going to be laid off.

There is fear in this country today. There is fear felt by the average working man or woman such as has never been felt before in our history. People are afraid.

The very morning of the budget I was going upstairs to have breakfast in the cafeteria of this building. The lady who served breakfast looked around to make sure that nobody could overhear her and said: "Mr. Tobin, do you think there will be something to get the country working again in this budget? Because I am afraid, I am afraid for my job, I am afraid for my sons and daughters, I am afraid for my friends. I have never felt afraid before". There is fear in the land. Even an employee of the national government, supposedly the safest job in the world, even someone employed in the House of Commons feels fear.

How do we measure this budget? We were told it would be realistic. Does this budget put back to work the 1.5 million who want to work but cannot find work? Does it offer to retrain, to stimulate, to motivate the 2.5 million who have gone on welfare? Does it give a sense of security, a sense of being able to sleep at night, to the millions more who are working but who fear losing their jobs at any time, even for a moment?

Not at all. Against that standard, against that test, this budget has failed this country.

Not only does the budget say to those who are unemployed, those who are without work: "You are on your own", but it then goes on to predict right in the budget paper—and these are not my words. These are not the words of the opposition. This is not the analysis of those who want to score political points. It is right in the budget document. It then goes on to tell us that unemployment is going to stay at a level in excess of 10 per cent for the next two years, in the range of 10 per cent. It tells us that 1.5 million unemployed people and 2.5 million people on welfare, that 4 million Canadians are acceptable losses in the so-called war against inflation.

I find that absolutely callous. I find it cruel. Frankly, measured against the responsibility of any government with a heart, I find it cowardly that a government would stand and say that not only has it no plan of action to deal with cruel levels of unemployment but it projects that those levels of unemployment will exist for at least another two years. Then, far enough into the future when supposedly no one can argue with the government it says: "By the way, 24 months down the road unemploy-