

The Budget

Court Challenges Program which was being used to establish rights of lower income Canadians.

I would ask him to comment on these because it seems to me that the budget is in fact a devastating blow to families in Canada.

Mr. Edwards: I appreciate the intervention of my friend from Victoria who is a fine, constructive member of this House and asks very good questions.

I find his question concerning pay equity somewhat troublesome. My understanding of what was announced in the budget was that there would not be retroactivity applied to whatever pay equity decisions were to be made in the future. I understood there was a point beyond which in the past one would not go in making those retroactive payments.

I believe that some of those rights have yet to be determined by the courts, and one cannot say that something is wiped out which is not yet established in its precise terms. The principle is established, but the terms and conditions have not yet been fully established by the court.

On the question of the child care program, yes I did campaign in the 1988 election. I knocked on door after door and was greeted by a great cross-section of people, in terms of income, in my riding. I was astonished to hear people rejecting the idea of universal day care.

It was a ground swell, and one that I felt could not be ignored. There were young mothers, many of them professionals or otherwise, who had chosen to take up to four or five years out of their careers in order to nurture and bond with their children. They said it was great if the two income families chose to both continue working and using day care, but what about mothers at home? They made a choice they felt was necessary for their children. They did not want to judge what other people did. They believed staying at home was very important to the nurturing and upbringing of their children and they were given no recognition for that through the tax system.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to put on the record some comments on the budget and to make an analogy. I think it will paint a picture for people. The analogy is that the budget is a prescription. The patient is Canada, and we have two specialists in charge of a sick patient.

Canada is economically sick. We have two doctors: Dr. John Crow and Dr. Maz. Before you can actually write a prescription, one has to assume that you do a diagnosis of the ills of the patient. I have heard all of these Tories get up and trumpet how fine it is that this budget is cutting taxes.

What do they want us to give them, a medal? They have been putting taxes up from the day they took office in 1984. Thirty times they increased direct and indirect taxes, on the backs of Canadians. They dropped the surtax, that is the tax on the tax. They dropped it a little bit, and they want us all to fall on our knees and worship them for that.

Who put the taxes up in the first place? They did. They put the taxes up which in fact increased the dangers to the health of the patient in the first place. Those taxes contributed to inflation. The doctor who was in charge of purging decided that the way to purge all the bad humours from the patient's body was to increase taxes because we had to reduce the deficit.

What happens? It raises the temperature of the body, so now the haematologist comes into the operating room. He says he has to use the old tried and true method and bleed the patient. Let interest rates rise because we have to dampen the fires of inflation; the fever is high. We have to get the temperature down, so up goes interest rates. Up went the interest rates.

• (1310)

In fact I remember when Dr. Crow was brought before the finance committee that looks at the ethics of doctors. When we brought him before the finance committee, the whole question was why were we putting Canada into an inflationary period? It was a made-in-Canada inflation at that time. Mr. Crow told us wage demands were too high in this country compared to our competing partners and we had to get those wage demands down; we had to get the temperature down. By golly, he let those interest rates rise.

We had interest rates rising and we had taxes rising. This was the period when we got hit with the GST. At the same time this government deliberately removed itself from any responsibility for unemployment insurance. The Liberals of course had gone a long way toward transferring a lot of that cost on to the backs of employers and employees. With Bill C-21 this government went all the way. It absolved itself from any