

Mortgage Tax Credit

that we have to do to get the economy straightened out and get it going so that we can introduce more and more plans to help the Canadian home owner and the Canadian people generally.

I ask all members of the House to join us in expediting this through the House as quickly as we can.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) has treated this measure with the seriousness it deserves. I expect we will treat it with the same degree of levity. I am not sure we can quite manage the same technique of the Ted Mack comedy hour that he was able to master, but I think it is unfortunate that in the first made-in-Toryland measure that we have before the House, what we were able to do was to find more bombast than fact or reality. But I do want to pay a compliment to the Minister of Finance for the way in which he master-minded the Conservative campaign in Newfoundland, which turned out exactly as we wished. I am glad to see he is such a strong believer in the voice of the people, especially the *vox populi* of Newfoundland, because they have obviously spoken their own verdict about the first six months of the Conservative government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: I am hoping that as he, in his own humble way, was able to tell us that he was prepared to sit here in a minority position and listen to the voice of the House, those who represent a majority, he will take a lesson from what was said tonight in the byelection in his home territory about the wisdom of his course and the particular direction in which his government has gone.

I would say to you as well, Mr. Speaker, that members of this group of the official opposition certainly take in mind the invocation of the Christmas spirit that the minister has brought forward. We think that nothing more is needed in treating this legislation than a good dose of Christmas charity, because what we have for 5.5 million Canadian households is an Ebenezer Scrooge for Canada's finance minister.

He seems to take great delight in patting his own back and lauding the efforts of his government for the way in which they were going to provide such a great number of goodies under the Christmas tree for the Canadian taxpayer, but one of the unfortunate omissions in his remarks is that there would be 5.5 million households who would receive absolutely nothing under that Christmas tree. Nothing is being offered them under these circumstances. Unfortunately, those 5.5 million householders are those who are most in need, who have the greatest problems in housing and in their financial position, and who are probably most subject to the extreme pressures of increased cost which is caused by the present government's program of high interest rates.

Therefore, it seems just a little contradictory, if I may say so, that this minister, who has prided himself on the get tough position, on becoming the realistic finance minister, is engaged

[Mr. Crosbie.]

really in an exercise of Christmas fantasy and a vision of seeing plum puddings under the tree, and is not really addressing the serious problems of the Canadian economy. He is preparing to commit \$2.5 million, of very scarce tax dollars, on a scheme that will have a very limited impact.

So once we cut through all the folderol, the down home Johnnie Carson routine that we have heard for the past hour, once we cut to the bone of what this measure is, we find it is a discriminatory tax measure that is based on bad economics, and is bad for housing. It will do very little to ease the kinds of problems that have to do with the increased cost of housing and increased pressure.

To take an opposite tack to that of the hon. minister opposite, we will try to deal with this matter with some degree of seriousness, because what is important to the Canadian public is to recognize that this is the first piece of legislation that has come before the House with the stamp of Toryism all over it. This is the first piece of legislation that gives you a very clear indication of the tone and character of what the Tory government is all about. What it translates into is discrimination and bad economic management.

When you cut through Bill C-20 and look at what it actually has to say to the Canadian public, you find it says that we are going to discriminate against close to three-fifths of the Canadian public and that we are going to use money badly, unwisely, and inefficiently in dealing with our economic problems. That is the verdict that will really be the end result and end consequence of Bill C-20. That is why we are very pleased to have in front of us the fact that no longer can the Minister of Finance and his cohorts do their little jig and say it is not their responsibility, "it is the responsibility of those guys on the other side", and they are just rehashing old legislation. This is their baby and they will have to live with it.

I believe that when the Canadian public has finished looking at what was really said in the debate, and the facts and figures are brought forward, there will be dismay at what was brought about on May 22, because all those pretences, all those puffed up pretensions that they were going to provide for a realistic economic management, have been thrown out the window. All those pretensions have been placed on the altar of political expediency, have been swayed by the Svengali of the Senate, Mr. Murray, who told them, "You better look tough on this one, so get your act together".

Now we have a poor Minister of Finance who, in his heart of hearts, knows that this is a bad piece of legislation, and rather than getting up here and defending it on the basis of fact, has had to resort to fiction as a way of providing some form of support for what is obviously a bad and unworkable credit to the Canadian people.

What is interesting is the way in which this particular legislation has gone through an evolution with respect to what was brought out about a year ago, by the then leader of the Conservative party as being the cure for everything that ails the Canadian public. It was to cure lumbago. It was to get the economy going. It was a prized jewel in his concept of stimulative deficits. We do not hear that word very often any more.