

*The Budget—Mr. Langdon*

I must say that the Minister boasted that there are no new initiatives in his Budget. Therefore, I say that it is a sick Budget from a sick Government, a Government which is staggering from scandal to scandal, a Budget in which inaction is made a virtue. It represents a sickness in the Conservative Government, and I deeply regret it.

● (1720)

**Mr. Hockin:** Mr. Speaker, in describing the Budget the Hon. Member referred to it as being pie in the sky, as popcorn, as hot air, or as something of no substance. Does he describe the following particular concrete achievements in the province in which we both live as pie in the sky or hot air? Some 356,000 jobs have been created in the Province of Ontario since September 1984; 62,000 jobs have been created in the Toronto area in the past 12 months; the value of building permits issued in 1985 was up 33.8 per cent or \$2.1 billion compared with 1984; building permits in the first 10 months of 1986 were up 34.7 per cent; and, for the month of January 1987, there were 5,738 housing starts. The list goes on and on, and I have only referred to the Province of Ontario. Those achievements are not pie in the sky or hot air. They are reality. They have been created by the climate and physical responsibility put in place by the Government. Perhaps we are not supposed to talk with any pride about Ontario, but this is real and this is where we live. Does the Hon. Member call these things—and I could mention farm cash receipts increasing in 1986 by 7.2 per cent compared with 1985—pie in the sky or hot air?

**Mr. Langdon:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps if the Minister had been listening a little more carefully he would have heard me refer to the pie in the sky aspects of the Budget in respect of tax reform. I indicated quite clearly that it was a Budget which had within it pie in the sky being promised, just as the Salvation Army used to do in the past, suggesting that tax reform would be brought in and that that would give us fairness and growth. That was the pie in the sky to which I referred.

Let me refer quite directly to the mass of magnificent statistics which the Minister read to the House. In his speech the Minister said that the problem which his Government faced in coming into office was that there had been too much government action, that Government was stifling the people of the country. It seems to me that that has led to a reversal, a retrenchment, or a Government which has been in retreat, for the most part, so far as economic initiatives are concerned since 1984. Certainly in respect of the Budget there is no new initiative of any kind, except for more taxes which fall upon the ordinary person.

With regard to the pattern within the country, I think that a Minister with the insight of the Minister who has just spoken would want very much to say that the over-all picture is crucial and that that picture shows, as I indicated in my speech, that growth rates have fallen in each year since the election of the Conservative Government.

Also I think that the Minister would want to recognize that the auto industry in his part of the country and in my part of Ontario has been a major, possibly overwhelming factor in respect of the tremendous expansion that has occurred in many parts of Ontario. Yet, that auto industry is presently being put at risk in terms of the Auto Pact, duty remission schemes, and the whole set of issues which is being bargained about in the free trade arrangements.

Unfortunately the Minister has not proven his point. Instead, he has demonstrated my point, that across the country we have seen economic devastation in many respects. In our part of the country we have seen gains, and those gains have come out of an industry which the Government is putting directly at risk.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) remembers the election campaign of 1984. However, I wonder whether he remembers a particular document commonly referred to as "Pocket Politics, 1984". I have been told that the document was given to Conservative candidates. It was a 46-page policy manual authorized by the PC of Canada Fund, according to what is written on it, as registered agents for the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

In any case, one thing Tory candidates were supposed to say was that a Conservative Government would double research and development effort to 2.5 per cent of the GNP in the first four years in office. I know the Hon. Member comes from the academic world and is obviously very concerned, as am I and many other people, about the research and development efforts or lack thereof of the present Government. Does he think, as do I, that it is difficult to consider this particular campaign to have been fulfilled? The budget of the National Research Council was cut from \$520 million in 1984 to \$398 million in 1986? In addition, the Tory Government across the way cut a further \$20 million on October 9, 1986. Does the Hon. Member agree that the Tories very badly breached this particular promise and failed to deliver in the popcorn Budget which was brought down yesterday?

**Mr. Langdon:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member. One is almost tempted to say "colleague" because we share the back-benches, but one must think of all with whom we share the back-benches, and it is a little questionable.

I think the point which he made was a crucial one for two reasons. First, there is no question that the economies of the future, the countries which will do well, the countries which will expand free trade, see accelerated growth rates, and keep their people at work, are the countries which invest in research and development, as we in Canada should be doing.

Second, I must say with regret that the failure to meet a promise when a Government is elected, especially a promise as direct and as concrete as the one to which the Hon. Member referred, leads to unfortunate cynicism about politics as a whole, to which the Government has contributed more than its share in recent weeks.