

The Budget

I could go on and on. I see the member is rising. I will wait for his question, it may be more intelligent. The co-operative housing program was a very important program to us and this budget zapped it.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to compliment my colleague on his address.

I am sure we were all struck by the terrible statistics he presented to Canadians so they could realize just how badly this government has mismanaged the economy. He alluded to some of the issues which I would like him to comment on.

The National Drug Strategy was reduced by \$32 million when we know about the serious drug problem facing Canadians and our youth. Then there is co-op housing. Poverty and housing are fundamental issues facing us as we try to raise our children and help them become productive members in society.

At the same time, we see the privatization of the Canada Student Loans Program and we know what privatization means. It means that it is going to be turned over to the banks who are not going to be giving out the student loans necessary for students to continue their post-secondary education.

What will happen is that our students, who are now facing higher costs because of the GST and other mismanagement, are now not going to be able to get the necessary loans to continue their education. Education is vital to our youth and vital to our nation.

The government considers the budget to be fair and caring. I thought that the member for Ottawa—Vanier might want to comment on the fair and caring aspects of those cuts.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, yes, I want to comment. There was the child tax credit. Remember that? It was supposed to be a sacred trust.

My colleagues and I believed that the government's commitment to universality was paper thin. The government has confirmed that now. We now know where the government stands because day care will not be a national program anymore. The minister of health said so yesterday.

• (1230)

The government has failed Canadians. How many times do I have to repeat it? It has betrayed the trust given to it by Canadians and it is time we voted the Conservatives out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. The next two speakers will have 10 minutes and 5 minutes questions and comments. The first speaker is the hon. member for Halton—Peel. And next is Laval—Ouest.

Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by congratulating the Minister of Finance on what he has been able to accomplish in this budget. It is an excellent, creative budget for disturbing times.

I would also like to congratulate the Minister of Finance for listening to the suggestions of many of my colleagues. Many members of Parliament in the Conservative caucus spent a long time offering suggestions to the Minister of Finance. Many of us were most happy and gratified to see that the minister did view a lot of those suggestions seriously.

This is a budget pretty well ideally suited for the times. When I say that I mean that the budget takes into account the fact that we are in a period of great economic uncertainty, that Canada has suffered a lot of unemployment, particularly over the past 18 to 24 months and that we are at the end, hopefully at the tail end, of what has been a long, tough recession for people. This budget sends out a message from the government, I hope it does, that none of us are suffering any illusions about the problems we now face as Canadians.

I am not going to stand up here today and say that the economy is getting better, that the budget is going to solve all the problems overnight and Canadians should have nothing but warm thoughts about the government. We have to be realistic. We have to make sure that we respond to people's very legitimate, real and human concerns these days. This is part of what this budget does.

Most of the criticism of the budget that I have seen has been that some of the critics of the government feel the budget did not contain enough stimulative measures to attack unemployment and that the government did not somehow come up with a lot of money instantly to create