

All of the provinces have public debt they have to pay. They have to pay interest on it. They have to try to get out of debt because debt to them is a way of financing current expenditures to some extent, and also capital expenditures. It is a very real thing. They all try to avoid it and get out of debt because interest to them is a cost.

It is different for the federal government. The federal government borrows money as well, of course, but it uses borrowing as a means of transferring more income to the wealthy from the low middle-income people and the low income people. The provinces have to pay it. The federal government simply collects it from one group and gives it to another. Only those at the top of the income level can buy significant amounts of Canada Savings Bonds or any of the other debt instruments the government uses. So there is that difference.

To the provinces debt is a real problem. To the federal government it is an opportunity for them to transfer more income into the pockets of those who need it least.

There was an item in the opening speech where the government talked about a national highway program. I thought it was coming to its senses and we were going to see something good in this coming budget.

The national highway program would do a couple of things. In the first place it would create a tremendous amount of job opportunity from one end of Canada to the other. It could be financed within Canada and would provide work in every province of Canada.

Those dollars being received by the people working on those projects would be spent in their own communities, in every province, from one end of Canada to the other. It would turn over time after time after time. It would generate a tremendous amount of economic activity.

Every time it turned over, the federal government would be there with its hand out getting its share of GST and income tax from those who were profitable working on that highway program. It would have been a tremendous income generator for the federal government. It would have been a tremendous income generator for hundreds of thousands of people in Canada who are unemployed. It would have given them some hope.

It would have done something else. Such a program would have helped tie Canada together from one ocean

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to the other, east to west. It would have helped eliminate some problems we have with north-south boundaries between provinces. It would have helped strengthen the east-west boundary between us and the U.S.

I have to ask myself why did nothing come of that? Why was it dropped? Who put it in there? Who wanted it in there? Opening speeches are contributed to by many people. The different cabinet ministers have an opportunity to say what they want. Somebody wanted the kind of program that would generate real economic activity in Canada and tie the people of Canada together from one end to the other. But somebody did not want it because there is not a word of it in the budget. Nothing. It is something that could have been so good.

Instead of that we have billion dollar programs for helicopters, for example. The only way we can put those helicopters to use is searching for submarines. The hon. member for North Island—Powell River suggested we buy the submarine navy from the Soviet Union or whatever country has it now and give them wheat in exchange. They desperately need wheat; they do not need the submarines. Then we would have some submarines to watch with our helicopters.

What are we going to do with those helicopters? They are not good for any other job except that. Billions of dollars are being wasted on projects like that when we could have had something that would have generated a lot of employment and economic activity. It would have been good for the economy here in Canada. It would have strengthened Canada from one end to the other. It would have strengthened that border. But we are not doing that.

This budget and the spending program announced by the Minister of Finance followed the regular Tory tradition that has been evident for the last eight years, since the Tories were elected in 1984. It continues to take money from the poorest and the low middle income people out of proportion to what it is taking from the highest income people. It continues to give new incentives and opportunities to those at the top of the pile to improve their position. It does nothing to get the economy going.

This housing program is going to run out pretty quickly. How many people in those categories need new homes? How many of them are really going to take their