

Job Creation

his haunches and said that what we have in front of us is a tax measure that is making the accountants and lawyers—

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the minister would permit a brief question on his last point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member accept a question?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to accept a question when I finish my remarks, if time is available.

The hon. member for Capilano, who is here defending the interests of the tax accountants and tax lawyers, was decrying one of the most important and probably one of the most liberal measures to be introduced in this country in years, and that is to make taxes equal for all Canadians and to eliminate advantage. When the hon. member says that this tax system is going to cause great injustices, I must ask, to whom? To his wealthy friends, his corporate partners? Is that who is going to be disadvantaged?

As the Minister of Finance pointed out, something like \$47 billion in revenue was lost last year through special advantages and tax loopholes. One would think, considering all the posturing and parading that the New Democratic Party does daily about equity and justice in this society, that it might have a good word for that very fundamental reform that is contained in the budget speech. Did we hear a word about that from the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans)? No, not a peep. That makes members on this side of the House wonder whether their interest really is in equity and justice. Are they really on the side of the small taxpayer with a family of four, who, as a result of the measures introduced by the Minister of Finance, will not have to pay taxes on an income which is under \$15,000? That budget measure contains a basic and fundamental thesis, and that is that the best way to ensure fairness in our system is to ensure fairness in the tax system.

We would accept the support of other parties. When they sit down and study these measures, they will realize that this principle is important and that far too many people in this country have for far too long gained an unfair advantage through the tax system. We are prepared to put that right.

I believe the budget document sets forward effective guidelines for the management of the economy in the 1980s. There is a series of proposals designed to bring down inflation and, therefore, unleash productivity in this country. There are measures to bring forward better equity and fairness in the tax system so that individual Canadians will know that they are equal one to another.

Most important, Mr. Speaker, there is a broad commitment to the issue of renewal, and to understanding that this country has tremendous growth potential. What we have to do is target in on different structural problems such as research and development, manpower and planning, industrial investment and sector analysis. All this is contained in the budget document. It is the kind of document that will provide a basis for discussion and consultation with the private sector in the

months and years to come. In this way we can arrive at mutually acceptable strategies and development programs. That is the reason for the budget. It makes good sense in this time of turmoil because it is based upon pragmatics, not upon outdated philosophies.

I hope that Canadians will realize that, the budget resolution provides that the most effective way to create jobs in Canada is through proper economic management and not simply by relying upon the outworn, ideological, textbook positions put forward in the introductory remarks of the previous speaker.

I hope that hon. members dealing with the resolution now before the House will realize that it seems to be simply an exercise in common room philosophy rather than pragmatic policy. That is probably one reason why we are on this side of the House and they are perpetually on that side of the House!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister indicated his willingness to clarify his concept of fairness and equity. As he will know, the indirect taxes which apply to all Canadians, senior citizens, people below the poverty line and so on, have doubled in the brief term of office of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). When he took over, those taxes represented \$100 per month per household. Today they represent—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member has not been recognized for a speech. If he wants to put a question to the minister, a question is in order, but he appears to be engaging in a speech at this point.

Mr. Hawkes: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I will put my question directly. The minister tried to show to the House that hidden taxes had not gone up. Is he trying to say that they have not doubled and are not now \$200 per month per household? Does he believe that hidden taxes are equitable—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has put his question.

Mr. Axworthy: I am pleased to answer the hon. member by pointing out to him that the government and the Minister of Finance have provided for substantial increases in the income supplement for old people. We were able to reduce the price for energy proposed by the previous government so that the consumer has a better deal. We have reduced unemployment insurance premiums by about 15 per cent in this year alone. So I would say that we had allocated our scarce resources to helping those who need help most. Whatever particular fantasy the hon. member believes about hidden taxes, I suggest that rather than looking in his crystal ball, he should look at the budget instead of whatever peculiar figures he seems to be drawing out of the hat.

● (1630)

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Mr. Speaker, having heard the hon. minister, I think that all hon. members of this House would surely agree that this government just has no shame. For instance, in response to the question put by my