

Government Orders

With the news today that the northern cod stocks are even lower, there will be an increased effort by National Sea and the big guys to put more concentration in the Scotia-Fundy. You will see that it cannot be done. National Sea and Fishery Products have to be encouraged to go and get rid of the foreigners within the 200-mile limit. We have to encourage a good marketing system for the underutilized stocks that we have not been able to use and market up until now and which we have allowed the foreigners to come and fish.

I understand the minister will be in Halifax tonight. I do not know why he will be in Halifax tonight. I hope it is to meet with the fishermen who are sitting in at those offices in the areas that I mentioned. I do hope that he will go down and meet with them. It is long overdue.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak against this bill and to offer my views contrary to the request to borrow \$25.5 billion to finance a budget that in my view is predicated on some fundamentally, radically different views and concepts on economic and fiscal management imperatives that the government has overlooked over the course of the last several years. It is now in the course of this budget, in the course of its economic plan for this coming fiscal year, imposing changes on the economic and social contract of this country that has until now existed between the federal government and Canadians everywhere.

It is important to keep in mind that when we are talking about borrowing that amount of money in order to carry out a plan it is a plan that should meet the needs of Canadians. Yet some of the principles that are being addressed by the government are in direct opposition to the interests and needs of all Canadians.

For example, some of those basic principles that the Tories have ignored over the course of the last several years in office—some would say it has been much too long, but that would be too partisan and I do not want to engage in that—is the concept of mobility of all Canadians from one area of the country to another while at the same time maintaining an accessibility to government services provided by the federal government wherever they be in Canada. I speak of the provision of an equality of opportunity for all Canadians no matter where they live.

The other principle is that all Canadians have the right to enjoy the benefits which accrue to them as citizens of this country, again regardless of the region from which they originate or the region in which they choose to live.

Finally—and definitely it is not the last point but it is the one that I want to concentrate on—is the fact that all Canadians have the right to have a government that recognizes under all the democratic principles which we hold dear that it be not only responsible but accountable for its actions.

What do we see instead? Through government policies over the course of the last six years we have seen a veritable onslaught—not a simple attack—on all those social programs which Canadians have fought so hard for and which they have become accustomed to accept as being part of the Canadian mainstream. I refer to the universality of social programs.

Many of my colleagues have documented the manner in which the government has attacked those programs that we have referred to as universal social programs. Over the course of the last two elections the governing party has identified these programs as being sacred trusts. Those programs have been eroded, I would say almost maliciously and viciously, by the budgets presented by the government.

For example, under these principles, workers, who by virtue of their contributions along with their employers' to the unemployment insurance fund, could expect to receive some sort of income maintenance in times of duress, not that they aspire to moments of duress. On the contrary, they see themselves as contributors and as those who play a role in the development of the economy and the future of the country. But there are occasions when there is a downturn in the market-place. In order for them to enjoy those five principles which I enumerated a few moments ago, they have the right to expect that their government, which was a third party to that unemployment insurance scheme, would also allow them to rely on a financial scheme that allows them to remain in their communities.

Fishermen, as my colleague pointed out, and farmers as well, have an equal right to remain in their communities with a guarantee of financial support from the federal government when times become tough. The alternative is much too unbearable. The alternative is that they take up their roots, leave, and go someplace else. It continues that whole process of inexorable urbanization and deprives the country of the opportunity