

Government Orders

What is the government doing to help small industry? I know the government is doing a great deal for big business and the super rich but what it is doing for the middle class, the upper middle class? Absolutely nothing. It is trampling the smaller people.

What is it doing at the Department of National Defence, for example. Were there any cuts there? I did not see any cuts but it is certainly spending billions and billions of dollars for helicopters. One wonders if they are really essential at this particular time. Should we not give these purchases a second look if we are going to make savings? Why not look at that type of project?

We have not created jobs through infrastructure. The municipalities need to renew, to fix their infrastructure. Things are breaking up. Everything is going badly. Our leader at the beginning of the year made some very valid suggestions on how we could help out the economy.

[Translation]

For instance he suggested a partnership between the federal, provincial and municipal governments for urban infrastructure projects.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to attend a convention of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

[English]

The members of the federation came and asked and begged the Minister of Transport to help out, to ask the federal government to help out in an infrastructure program and they would become partners. I was astounded when publicly, in front of the whole crowd, he refused to participate in this partnership.

Where is the partnership?

For four years I have been sitting on the public accounts committee. If this government wants to save money it can save tens of millions of dollars. It should read the reports from the public accounts committee. It should read the annual reports of the Auditor General. That is a must. There is waste to the point that we know the RCMP is investigating the botched job that has been done in computer purchases.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak in response to the Minister of Finance's mini budget of December 2 and in response to the government bill before us tonight, Bill C-98, requesting further borrowing authority.

These are troubled times. These are times when few Canadians feel optimistic about their future, when few Canadians feel secure in their lives, when few Canadians express confidence and trust in their government.

These are troubled times because the economy is unable to support the population. Ours is an economy that allows 11 per cent or more of our people to be unemployed. Ours is an economy that keeps 2.5 million people on welfare, that forces farmers and small business owners into bankruptcy, allows in just three years one in six of our manufacturing jobs to disappear.

Ours is not a healthy economy and the job of the finance minister and of the government is to provide leadership that will keep people working, that will create jobs for those who are not, and will build a capable and confident economic base on which to secure a reasonable quality of life, accessible to most residents of Canada.

However, the finance minister and the Conservative government have clearly failed just as they have failed since they were first elected in 1984. In my province, Saskatchewan, we clearly see the mistakes of this government. The agricultural economy has never been worse. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is projecting a shortfall of \$800 million this year. The problem is a combination of many things, but they are compounded by this year's drought, frost and snow which has succeeded in reducing crop yields in some cases to absolutely zero.

If ever there was a time for federal government support to the agricultural community, this is it. Three weeks ago the Canada Grains Council reported that Canadian wheat farmers lost \$2.5 billion U.S. to U.S. government export policies between 1985 and 1990. In a late October report the wheat pool reported that Saskatchewan farmers have each lost a total of \$109,220 over the last nine years because of the international grain war.

We have been behind the eight-ball for years but we have never seen anything like what is happening out there now. In my own area where there were approximately 5,000 crops planted this year the crop insurance