

badly. During the previous 12-month period we have created in Canada more than 400,000 new jobs. Since 1970, our record has been the best of all the industrialized nations. We have created in Canada more than a 50 per cent increase in new jobs. Compare that with the so-called dynamic economy like that of—

**Mr. Blenkarn:** The United States.

**Mr. Peterson:**—West Germany, in which case it has had a 2 per cent decline in the number of actual jobs.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** How about the United States?

**Mr. Peterson:** If all Members feel that the way we are going to cut the deficit is by cutting back on social spending, I would like to hear them rise and with a unanimous voice tell us which of those programs they would cut back.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** How about Canadair and de Havilland?

**Mr. Peterson:** The Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), the clown prince of the Official Opposition, has said that when the Tories are in power they are going to get tough. On whom are they going to get tough? We have listened to them throughout the debates over the past six months on Canada's economic future. When you go through the the debates, Mr. Speaker, and look at what the Official Opposition is proposing, you will come up with more than 150 new expenditure programs. Almost nowhere are the Tories prepared to say, "Let us cut back there". Tories are political opportunists and hypocrites of the worst order. If they feel they merit the confidence of the people of Canada, then it is up to them to come forward with comprehensive, constructive alternatives. But what have they told us they are going to do? Very simply, they have told us that they have no policy. The Hon. Member for St. John's West has said, "Well, I agree with what the Finance Minister has proposed". Or we hear, "Yes, we have policies, but we are afraid that if we tell you what they are, you might implement them for the benefit of Canadians. Therefore, we are going to hold them back". They feel we will pinch these wonderful policies which could be helping the Canadian people at this time—if they have them. Tories are pretending they have them, but they are going to hold them back to try to make political hay with them when it comes to election time. I was not elected to this House to think only of the next election. If the Tories have concrete alternatives to help the unemployed, I say, bring them forward.

Before I leave this point, it is important to mention some figures that were contained in the *Globe and Mail* of this morning. The article pointed out social spending as a percentage of gross domestic product in seven of our major countries. West Germany spends 31.5 per cent of its gross domestic product on social spending. Canada spends only 21.7 per cent. This is only a percentage point more than the United States spends. At the bottom is Japan which spends 17.5 per cent. The international comparisons with comparable countries do not indicate that we are overspending on our social programs. When I see the unemployed people out there, I am not prepared to advocate that we cut back on our social spending in

order to try to come to some Holy Grail, whereas the Tory solution will be increased expenditures, decreased deficits and more jobs than we are presently creating. Canadian people will not buy that.

● (1710)

Let us look at some of the measures in the Budget. I commend what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) has done here for small business, particularly in cutting back on the limits where small business tax is available to our small businesses. Small businesses have demonstrated their capacity to create new jobs in Canada. We are putting money into the hands of small business people who have the track record at creating jobs. We will see those efforts come to fruition. They will bear fruit. I also like the thrust of encouraging more worker participation in both stock ownership and profit sharing. Those two measures are an integral part of the measures dealing with business.

Pensioners have been dealt with in a way that is responsible. The most crying and pressing need of any group of Canadians today has been that of senior citizens, particularly single ones, most of whom are women living below the poverty level. By increasing the guaranteed income supplement by \$50, we are addressing that group directly in the most concrete way possible. If there is to be any criticism from the Opposition, let that criticism be on the basis that perhaps we have not gone far enough in bringing the incomes of seniors closer to the poverty line. The poverty line should be the minimum target when we are a country of such great resources and means. It is a travesty that persons reach their retirement years, having made their contribution, with their only aspiration being to live below the poverty line.

I appreciate what the Minister has done in trying to bring private pension plans and the Canada Pension Plan more into line with the needs of meeting the vast financial commitments which will exist as our population ages. It is a tough issue with which to deal, but I believe excellent steps have been taken. I commend the task force chaired by the Hon. Member for Sudbury (Mr. Frith) for its recommendations which found their way into the Budget. I am particularly pleased that those provisions will create greater equality of opportunity for women, particularly single women, with survivor benefits and compulsory splitting of pension plans on separation. In the past we have seen in areas such as these that injustice has reigned. I am particularly pleased that we will see a two-year vesting instead of a ten-year vesting. Private pension plans have to become portable. The test will be whether the private sector will grasp the opportunity made available to it in this Budget. If private sector businesses and the insurance industry do not take up those plans and increase the role of private pension plans in our society beyond the paltry 10 per cent they now enjoy, the only alternative for governments in this land will be to increase the size of the public pension sector. We are awaiting anxiously what the private sector will do with this opportunity made available in the Budget.