

*The Budget—Miss Bégin*

own Members who have not been listened to in the past. That is the prescription for a recovery budget.

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, in listening to the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell), I am provided with an excellent example of the kind of criticism which I find particularly pernicious and sterile; in other words, a view of the mind instead of a view of reality.

For good reasons, most newspapers in the country have labelled this budget a "business" budget. The Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway concludes that that is a kind of sin, that there is something deeply wrong with that. He tries to conclude that there is a deep, intrinsic opposition between a business budget and a budget for the people. I do not quite know where the Member's conclusion comes from. I do not know what kind of extraordinary thesis he is propounding. He opposes the private sector and concludes that only a mix of Government and private sector—for some reason it must be the small private sector because they are better—would save the country. He does not elaborate at all on what that mix would be. That is his thesis.

If I may say, I am a social Minister. I have been the Minister of social affairs in this country for more than five years. I have been in politics for more than ten years for that very reason. Like many others, I have often tried to fight against Ministers of Finance because that is the name of the game. At times I have tried to obtain from the Minister more money for benefits in the field of which I am the special voice in Cabinet. Although this budget is labelled a "business" budget, I am very pleased with it.

Let me explain. It is a business budget, but it is for the people. That is what interests me. I do not see any sacrosanct rule that says anything that comes from the private sector is automatically covered with sin. In a country like Canada, that concept totally escapes me. I respect the private sector each time they create a good job in my riding.

When this Member concludes emphatically that there is nothing in the budget for the people of his riding, I disagree. I happen to know Vancouver-Kingsway. I have been in that riding to visit and to campaign. I know people who live in Vancouver. What he said is not fact.

Some young people in his riding will find jobs because of this budget. Some mothers will get better deductions for child care expenses because of this budget. All the low-income workers in his corner of the country will get a much better tax break under expenses against their jobs, and many others will find jobs because of the budget. I do not understand why he says municipalities do not benefit from this budget.

In my own municipality in a corner of Montreal, we have just announced an excellent project through the NEED program that includes physical fitness equipment. This is in the northern part of Ville d'Anjou. This equipment will be there forever because of the NEED program.

I could name project after project that will provide municipalities in the country with things they did not have before the

NEED program, and this budget expands the NEED program. I do not understand why the NDP has no respect for a good business budget that does not harm the small people, that does not bring inflation up, that does not bring interest rates up. To me, that business budget has a social dimension. It is the best of both worlds. I am very pleased with it.

I do not like to be the Minister of welfare. I do not like to have to pay more welfare to the people through the Provinces day after day, month after month. I would like to see every person in Canada working. If the private sector is a good provider of jobs, I am in favour of the private sector. What is wrong with that? Where is the sin in that? Can you tell me? What is wrong in labelling that budget a "business" budget when it is for the people? A people's budget is my budget. I want it and I like it.

I do not see what is conservative about the budget. Why oppose conservatism in a budget that uses the private sector, the key part of society, to create jobs and to make the motor of the economy turn and run?

As the biggest spender in the Government, let me put to my colleagues in this House why I not only accept but fully support a budget like this. I am the one who spends the most because of my statutory program and other programs of transfers of income to people and provincial Governments. It is immoral that these programs have to increase because of tough times in the economy. Mind you, it is good that these programs exist to help people in these difficult times. But I know very well that a highly productive economy is not necessarily the enemy of the population. On the contrary, it is with high productivity that I am assured of more funding for better social programs.

*[Translation]*

In other words, I feel we must have a highly productive economy if Governments are to improve the social programs they use to deal with problems that must, in fact, be dealt with by Governments, because the private sector does not operate according to the same rules. It is also my earnest wish that this highly desirable goal of increased productivity should be achieved in a manner that is both civilized and humane. We must keep our social perspective and always maintain, as the bishops requested in their letter, a scale of human values, with emphasis on the individual and not on corporate and technological considerations.

I think this is very important.

*[English]*

Another dimension of the budget has not been discussed very much because it is not spelled out in words in the budget. That is because at a time when social programs are under attack in other western countries, as is well known to the media, this Government has been able to maintain and even strengthen the social contract with Canadians. That is also part of the budget. There is an explicit budget which we can all read, and there is an implicit budget which we must decode. That is part of the budget just the same.