

Instead, I will comment a little bit on what the Budget did for farmers.

As a western Canadian who grew up working on cattle ranches and farms for a good portion of his life, and recognizing the value of agriculture to our country, I know, as do we all, that the farming community is hard-pressed. In your Province of Alberta, Mr. Speaker, farmers find themselves in a real crisis situation. The last best estimate that I have seen is that about 50,000 farmers across the country today are in a financial crisis situation. They are simply unable to pay off their debts. What has the Government done? Fundamentally, very little. If you are a farmer who happens to be doing business with the Farm Credit Corporation, and the President of the National Farmers Union said this morning that accounts for about 25 per cent of the troubled farmers, there is a possibility of renegotiating your debts. However, if you are part of the other 75 per cent who happen to be dealing with provincial financial institutions or the chartered banks and others, forget it. The Government of Canada has literally turned its back on you. Well, that is not true. The Government said it will help you get out of farming. It will find ways and means of making it easier for people to leave their farms. I am not certain that is the kind of support the farmers of Canada thought they would get from Mr. Mulroney during the election campaign in 1984.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Point of order, the Hon. Member for Gatineau (Mrs. Maily). I know what she is going to say. The Hon. Member will please refer to the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for my inconsiderate use of the words "Mr. Mulroney". I was referring to the Prime Minister of Canada, obviously, in his previous role as Leader of the Opposition. When he was campaigning he said: "We are concerned about farmers, we are going to do something to them." I think they thought, rather than "to them", he would help farmers and not help them get out of farming. I do not think that was the kind of help people thought the Prime Minister was promising. However, when you look at all these documents, that is what you find. That is what is in the Budget for farmers.

I listened with interest to the Premier of the Province of Alberta this morning on the radio. He was very angry, upset and disturbed. He was saying there is nothing in this Budget for the Province of Alberta. He was very dismayed at that. I know the news media were trying to find Mr. Filmon of Manitoba to get an idea of what he was thinking. Unfortunately they could not find him in order to find out how the Leader of the Conservative Party in Manitoba reacted to the Budget. However, when the Premier of Alberta stands up and says there is nothing in it for Albertans, just you wait. Next I think it will be the Premier of Saskatchewan, not to mention the Premier of British Columbia.

Again, what is there in this Budget for farmers and ranchers? Very little. What is in it for the jobless of Canada?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Are you kidding? Jobs, jobs, jobs.

Borrowing Authority Act

Mr. Riis: No, taxes, taxes, taxes. You have that mixed up.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Five hundred and eighty thousand new jobs.

Mr. Riis: We have an initiative, the validity of which some of us question. Nevertheless, let us recognize the initiative by the Government called the Canadian Jobs Strategy. That is the Government's initiative to create jobs, to help business and community and non-profit groups to hire people. But what did this Budget do? It cut it.

• (1410)

Mr. Hudon: No.

Mr. Riis: Yes. The amount of funding in the Canadian Jobs Strategy this year was \$900 million. Next year it is going to be \$800 million. Using my simple arithmetic that means it has been cut, not totally, but cut in revenue. This is done at a time when there are 1.25 million unemployed people in Canada. The Government's own statistics tell us that this is not going to change much in the next couple of years. We are told that at the moment we have 9.8 per cent unemployment and with any luck it will get down to 9.6 per cent this year. That is hardly what one would think of as an optimistic forecast.

Why did the Government not set targets for the years ahead? Why did it not say, for example, that within two years it wants to move the unemployment rate down to 3 per cent, and in the next two years by another 3 per cent? Why did it not set some goal to shoot for so it could put in place strategies to accomplish that goal? I gather from reading the Budget documents that the Government is saying it knows we have a little more than one million people out of work, about 10 per cent of the labour force, but that is the way it is, that is the price we pay. I do not think that was the kind of initiative the people of Canada were expecting to find in this Budget. What was in the Budget for the unemployed other than cuts?

Something that troubles me greatly as a Parliamentarian from western Canada is that I notice one of the areas which will experience major cuts in the years ahead will be the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. Which areas of the country does the Department of Regional Economic Expansion help? Does it do much for downtown Toronto or the city of Ottawa? It was by and large put into place to assist the Atlantic provinces and western and northern Canada, provinces like British Columbia. But the Government is making massive cuts in this Department. That sends to me a very clear message. The Government is saying to the regions of the country: "Forget it. We are abandoning you. We know times are tough but we are going to make them tougher. We are going to cut our support systems back and reduce job creation funds". That is what Government is saying.

I would like to speak about young people. I believe that if there is a disgrace in Canada today it is that so many of our young people are out of work and so many of them cannot afford to go to post-secondary institutions. Too many of our young people are collecting unemployment insurance and wel-