

*The Budget—Mr. Elzinga*

federal sales tax on farm fuels. We have a number of other significant proposals to regenerate economic activity in that very important sector of our Canadian society.

We have just gone through one of the worst recessions since 1930. In 1983, investment in the corporate sector was 12 per cent less than the year before. Canadian business is operating at only two-thirds of its capacity. Housing construction throughout the country has slowed considerably. Inflation has declined, however, and we give some credit to the Canadian people and to the Government for that, but it is twice as great as that of our two greatest trading partners, Japan and the United States.

● (1640)

I ask Hon. Members where those bright hopes we held for this country in the early 1980s have gone? I can recall a time when to live dangerously was of one's own choosing rather than a national Government policy. Unfortunately, this Liberal administration has adopted just such a policy. There is scarcely a difficulty that we in this nation face that does not have this Liberal administration's fingerprints on it.

Let us for just a moment look at the future as it relates to our Party. I just touched on the agricultural policy we announced. We put together five very important task forces which are to come forward with recommendations. We have indicated on a consistent basis that we as a national Government would reduce the budgetary deficit. We would simplify the Income Tax Act and reduce the unnecessary government burden on both the small business and the agricultural sectors. We will increase spending on research and development and on our Armed Forces. These are just basic principles, Mr. Speaker, and we are in the process of putting meat on the bone so we can restore economic activity in this great nation of ours.

Compare that with what we had on February 15. The Government promised us a plan to study mortgage insurance. One only has to look back to 1974 when the same Government promised us proposals where individuals could repay their mortgage without any type of penalty. To this date we have not seen legislation along those lines. There is a small business reform proposal; we have been pushing for that for years. I commend the Government for increasing the GIS, but here again the increase is only half that advocated by an all parliamentary group studying the pension situation in Canada.

We in this Party are deeply worried about our budgetary deficit because every dollar this Government proposes to borrow will simply go to pay interest on our national debt, interest only. That is like an individual borrowing on his Master Card or VISA to pay off the interest on a car loan he has at the bank. The deficit in this Budget is projected to be close to \$30 billion. Our national debt is in the vicinity of some \$200 billion; truly a sad legacy for the young people of this nation. I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, that we would simplify the Income Tax Act. Our Liberal friends opposite also have a way to simplify the Income Tax Act. The new Liberal proposal for the upcoming tax forms read like this:

Number 1: How much money did you make last year?

Number 2: What were your expenses?

Number 3: How much do you have left?

Number 4: Send your Liberal Government in Ottawa the item listed in Number 3.

Mr. Speaker, I have travelled this country a great deal in my role as the national President of our Association. Canadians are looking to us as a national Party to take corrective action when we do form the Government. We can justifiably point back with pride to the Budget we introduced in 1979. That Budget squarely confronted the economic difficulties we as a nation were facing. We proposed solutions based on sound economic management, and we offered policies which truly offered encouragement to those regions and disadvantaged groups throughout the country. We also offered encouragement and incentives to the private sector of our society. Our Budget of 1979 placed women in a position of equality with men in so far as working in family enterprises is concerned. We introduced an energy tax credit for those in the middle and lower income levels to meet higher energy costs. We had specific measures to help those in the agricultural and small business sector with high interest rates. We had significant capital gains relief for the farming population. To top it all off, we were reducing the Government budgetary deficit and Government spending. Yet the Social Policy Planning Board of Canada labelled that Budget the most socially progressive Budget introduced in Canada in the past ten years. More important than that, I wish to stress that we showed a deep sensitivity to the far flung regions of our country. That too is what the present Leader of our Party is doing. He has shown a deep sensitivity to the far regions and to minorities, be they ethnic, cultural or linguistic. That is why Canadians are looking to us to form the next government.

I am reminded of the time when President Reagan addressed this Chamber quite some time ago. He indicated that he likened government to a baby. He said it was an alimentary canal with a huge appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other. Supposedly that is what we as Members of Parliament are to do, to return responsibility to our federal institutions. But, sadly, this Liberal administration opposite has not done that. Canadians are looking at us to restore that sense of responsibility. We give them that assurance, that we are going to restore economic responsibility to this great nation of ours.

On a few occasions I have referred to my parents coming to this country from Holland. They did so because this was a land of hope and opportunity. This was a land where one could work hard and reap the rewards. Again I stress to you, judging from the input I have been receiving from all across this country, that Canadians are looking to us to restore that hope in this nation. As all Canadians do, I love this country. I love the potential it can offer to us and to future generations. But this potential is being denied by an administration which appears to be uncaring.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we in the Progressive Conservative Party are the only alternative to a Government whose actions are dangerous, have proved divisive and, quite frankly,