

The Budget—Mr. Riis

of gesture that will encourage labour across Canada to be willing to co-operate fully? Is that the kind of signal that the Government wants to send out to labour, putting a gun to their head in so-called free collective bargaining? This budget fails to provide any real hope for middle and low-income Canadians in the months ahead, those Canadians who have not been part of the so-called recovery program to date.

I have to refer for a moment or two to my Progressive Conservative friends. They have gone on at some length about the deficit. They argue whether the deficit should be \$27 billion, \$29 billion, \$31.5 billion and so on. That is their concern. They say they are very concerned about that. But the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) stood in his place the other day and said: "We need to increase defence spending by \$300 million". Then the fishery critic said in Vancouver: "We have to help the fishing sector and add another \$300 million." In agriculture the Tories say the same thing. The Hon. Member who is the critic for employment suggests that we spend more on job creation. The small business critic says we have to spend more on tax concessions to small business. The industry critic stands up daily in this House and says: "We have to provide more and more tax concessions to the corporate sector to encourage it to invest".

You cannot have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. You cannot have individual Members standing up day after day saying spend millions of more dollars here, hundreds of millions of dollars there and billions more in tax concessions, and then say that we have to reduce the deficit. If they were being honest and truthful to the people and were going to assist those sectors as they say they will, and if they are going to reduce the deficit, do you know, Mr. Speaker, who will suffer as a result of that? Do you know who will have their pensions cut? Do you know who will reduce unemployment insurance and reduce assistance to single parents? The Progressive Conservatives.

Mr. Taylor: Baloney!

Mr. Riis: You cannot have it both ways. You cannot have a reduced deficit and increased spending in virtually every sector. They have to come clean. That is why the Government is being told these days by Progressive Conservatives that they are not going to tell them what they are going to do.

I have to give credit to the Hon. Member who was the previous Minister of Finance in the Conservative Government, the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie). I have to give him credit for being honest with the people of Canada. He stood up and said: "We cannot tell you what we are going to do. We are unable to tell you what our policies are, because if we did, the people of Canada would never vote for us". He is an honest man; he is an honest John.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Riis: I am pleased to share a spot on this side of the aisle with such an honest, straightforward Conservative.

Mr. Crosbie: You were there in 1979. Why did you vote against us?

Mr. Riis: I want to pause here in my comments to supplement the amendment provided by the Hon. Member for St. John's West. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans):

That the amendment be amended by changing the period at the end of the last sentence to a comma, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words:

"and this House condemns the government for continuing the Liberal-Conservative policies that have produced record numbers of unemployed, widespread poverty among our elderly, and burdensome taxation for middle and low income Canadians; and this House further condemns the government for failing to introduce in this budget a fair recovery programme that would end unproductive tax concessions to corporations, rescind the \$1.4 billion in consumer tax increases announced in the last budget, provide for mechanisms to deal fairly with job displacement resulting from technological change, and increase productive investments in those sectors of the economy which will be the backbone of any future economic prosperity".

Having made the comments I did about my friends in the Conservative Party that they are not prepared to be honest with the people of Canada in terms of their policies, and while we in the New Democratic Party have criticized the Government and the Minister of Finance for not taking the action we felt was required at this time to ensure a fair recovery and have criticized the Conservatives for being vague, I feel obligated to put on the record some of the recommendations we would have put in this Budget. We hope that the Government will consider them in its next budget which it will bring in before another election.

● (1220)

The first thing we would do would be to rescind the increased taxes to consumers. On many occasions we have heard that we need to have a consumer-led recovery; that it is important for Canadians to be able to purchase the homes they need, the appliances they need and the vehicles they require in order to provide stimulus to the manufacturing sector that will enable plants to operate at more than the present 60 per cent or 70 per cent capacity. To that end people must have disposable income to afford these kinds of necessities.

The thing that must not be done, as was done by the Conservative Government during the depression, is to increase taxes. Yet the Minister of Finance is quite prepared to say that taxes on every Canadian household will be increased between \$200 and \$300 this year, as if that will assist in the recovery program. The first thing this Party would do would be to rescind this tax increase.

In an effort to deal with the deficit, we would then reform the personal income tax system so that everyone would pay their fair share. On many occasions we have pointed out that thousands and thousands of Canadians with incomes of \$50,000 per year or \$100,000 per year or \$500,000 per year do not pay any income tax at all. Then who pays? The 16 million average Canadians who file tax returns each year whose tax is deducted at source pay. They pick up the shortfall and pay more than their fair share. The personal income tax system should be changed so that everyone pays a fair share of the tax burden.