

*The Budget—Mr. Skelly*

an application is on its way, it takes ten days to come, then ten days to go back, and if there is a mistake, another ten days goes by before it is returned. You then correct the mistake, send it back, taking ten days more. By the time you have managed to establish your claim, a month to six weeks has gone by. The postal services are not good. The unemployment insurance services are not good. The employment services are nonexistent. Small businesses in single industry communities are in difficult situations. They deal with a small market. Prices, because of small volumes, are extremely high. The cost of transportation in many areas is absolutely outrageous. The ability of small businesses to attract financing and generally develop a range of goods and services for people in those communities is extremely limited. Not only does that hurt the entrepreneur in the small community, but it detracts from the quality of life in those communities. The small business assistance program that took special cognizance of the plight of small businesses in single-industry towns would be worthy of this Government since a great deal of the wealth here is generated in those communities, but they receive a very small share of the return on the investment they make.

● (1650)

Let me point out one other factor in single-industry towns. I am thinking of the cost of living, which is outrageous. There is usually a very limited supply of goods and services, whether we are talking about food, clothing or appliances. That small selection is generally extremely expensive when you can have the same things in the southern Canada belt. Again, there could be some concern that this Government provide some sort of relief for transportation costs. That in turn would provide a substantial benefit to those communities. It would improve the quality of life. It would improve the range of goods and services, and it would certainly bring down the prices. I mention that again to the former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher), who unfortunately with his rather convoluted explanations of the Federal Business Development Bank did not get around to the matter of reducing the federal excise tax on transportation fuels, or to the matter of allowing some form of rebate to designated single-industry communities that are beyond, say, a certain distance. Small businesses that bring goods into those communities could then apply for a rebate and reduce the cost of transportation. Should we be looking at another budget before the next election, which seems to be coming upon us at a rather rapid rate, I would hope that by raising these concerns the Government could pay closer attention in the next Budget to the plight of single-industry communities.

The next area I want to speak about concerns the native communities. Of the 32 communities in my riding, I have a rather large number of native communities. I am sure many other Members of Parliament have the same type of situation and are very concerned that this Budget does nothing for native communities. It does absolutely nothing. One of the greatest continuing failures of the Canadian Government is its failure to work with diligence to solve the problems of native

communities or to help native communities solve their problems. Unemployment in most native communities within my riding ranges from 75 per cent to 90 per cent. The indicators of the quality of life in those communities are very different from the general indicators of the quality of life in Canadian society as a whole. Life expectancy is lower in native communities, a completely unjustified state of affairs. Infant mortality is higher and suicide rates are higher in those communities. Housing is abysmally poor. Medical and health care standards are much lower than they are generally in the Canadian society. Economic opportunities exist in many cases, but the access to capital, which would provide them with the ability to capture those opportunities, is extremely limited, if not non-existent. Training in native communities, because of the Government's failure to provide adequate resources to bring the development of human resources forward, is almost nonexistent; it does not appear in the Budget, Mr. Speaker. There is no mention in the Budget or any indication which could bring hope to those native communities. There is no doubt those communities are in serious difficulty. We have heard from Members who represent them time after time.

There are four general principles that I think would go a long way to help resolve the plight of native Canadians. The first one is the rapid settlement of aboriginal land claims. Access to land, water, forests and mineral resources is access to the wealth, a share of the wealth, of this country. This Government could make moves in some areas to provide perhaps downpayments on that access, which would bring a direct link to wealth in the native community.

Second, the Government has to provide access to capital. Without some form of developing resources readily available in some communities, native people will continue the cycle of welfare, unemployment insurance, limited seasonal work, back to unemployment insurance and then welfare. That access to capital is imperative. Many mechanisms have been suggested, but these suggestions have largely fallen on deaf ears. Given the choice of providing income maintenance in the form of welfare and unemployment insurance, the Government has failed to take advantage of many of the recommendations that have been put forward.

Third, the movement to Indian self-government is imperative. The entrenchment of the principles of native self-government in the Constitution must go forward, as well as the phasing out of the Department of Indian Affairs. Working diligently to support the development of the self-government concept for native people is imperative.

Fourth, a massive commitment to improve the quality of life in Indian communities is very important. There has to be a substantial investment in housing, health care, education, community services, and in income support systems for those native people who are, because of dislocation, age or some handicap, not able to participate in growing opportunities.

The Budget does not speak of native people. The Canadian Government has a special responsibility to the aboriginal peoples of this nation. Those people and that special responsibility have been completely ignored in this Budget. It is my