

I am sure most of my colleagues used the opportunity of the last week or ten days to visit their constituencies. I made a point of talking to some of my constituents. If there is one sad occurrence in our country today, it is that the Government has not provided any optimism, sense of hope or any vision for people to see a future in our country that is creative or innovative.

I talked to representatives of the disabled community. There are 1.5 million Canadians who are disabled and the unemployment rate in that group is approximately 80 per cent to 85 per cent. What is the Government of Canada doing for these individuals? Is it giving them some hope that they will be employed in the future? Is it introducing an affirmative action program so that when corporations receive sizeable tax concessions or grants they cannot merely contemplate hiring disabled people but must hire disabled Canadians who are able to work in their plants, offices or factories? Does the Government have that kind of sensible, decent or compassionate approach? No, it does not.

It is evident from talking to the young people of our country that well in excess of 500,000 of them are unemployed. At this time in their lives they should be in the job market or going to post-secondary educational institutions to develop their careers and occupations. They should be beginning their families, buying homes and establishing themselves as productive, creative citizens. However, to do this one must be able to work or be able to afford to continue one's education. When there are 500,000 people under the age of 25 who want to work but cannot find a job in a country as rich as Canada, you would expect the Government to do something about it other than come up with some simplistic make-work program that will assist less than 2 per cent of those already unemployed. There will be hundreds of thousands of young Canadians leaving secondary schools in the next few months. What are their expectations when they enter the job market?

I remember that not too many years ago when I and my colleagues left our secondary schools, colleges, vocational schools or universities, there were up to 15 job opportunities for every graduate, which allowed us to choose our jobs. We were able to decide where we wanted to work, what type of job we wanted and to what extent. Today, the situation has reversed and for every single job there might be 15 young people applying for it. It is a terrible situation. It is a terrible deed we are doing not only to the young people of our country but to the future of our country.

Today is International Women's Day. It is a day when we reflect for a moment on how unfairly women are treated in our society, in the workplaces of Canada, in the Canadian tax system and in the fiscal policies of this country. I think it is perfectly clear that any sensible person would believe that major changes are required in our country to enable women to play their rightful role in our society. But is the Government taking any bold steps in this direction at this time? Is any leadership being provided in this particular area? No. Again, there is that sense of despondency and hopelessness along with the belief that the Government does not care about women,

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young people or the disabled of Canada. That feeling exists because people look for a hint that this is not so but cannot find it.

When I toured my constituency I talked to the small business people in my area. At a time when the Government has allowed interest rates to remain at these excessively high levels, small businesses can see that the tax concessions are going to the corporations so that they can pay an effective tax rate that is less than that paid by the small business community. They see numerous tax policies that are aimed strictly at the corporate level but not at the small or medium-sized businesses of this country. The number of foreclosures and receiverships has risen. People are being forced to close their doors and walk away from any optimism about the next decade in this country? No, they do not. Again, it is a reflection of the financial leadership of the Government.

We can talk about the food producers of our country, such as the farmers, ranchers and the fishermen from the interior and both coasts. Are they optimistic about being able to maintain their ranches, farms and fishing boats? Will they be producing food for Canadians in the future? There is no feeling that there is an opportunity for growth and development. The opportunities for young people to become farmers and fishermen are not there. The present level of interest rates will not permit a successful economic recovery to allow young people to get into food producing operations. But does the Government do anything about it? No, it does not.

Today the native people of Canada are meeting to discuss their future. One of the most pathetic experiences for parliamentarians is to visit Indian reservations in our ridings. When we see how Indian people are treated in this country, we enter the fourth world, with areas of extreme poverty and hopelessness. There is 90 per cent unemployment. That is the situation in many of the Indian reservations in our country.

We lack leadership. We lack a responsible system of tax collection. Our taxes are not collected fairly and not expended wisely. There is not much good one can say about the present Liberal Government of Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It being one o'clock I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.