

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 2, 1983

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from Thursday, April 28, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lalonde that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government.

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this debate on the budget. Since I realize that there is a certain amount of latitude allowed in the debate, I want to go on record now as stating how disappointed the Progressive Conservative Party is in the attitude of the New Democratic Party toward property rights when, on Friday, they refused unanimous consent to send the question of property rights to committee.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member must address the budget in the debate and not deal with completely extraneous matters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) has barely begun his speech. The Chair is astutely conscious of the problem of relevance, as is any occupant of the chair.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I too am distressed that the NDP, having refused consent, now feel so concerned about the decision they made on Friday when they refused to allow the motion to be treated as a non-confidence matter, refused to allow it to go to committee and, in effect, refused to allow Canadians the protection of property rights in the Constitution.

I examined the budget from the perspective of my constituents. Simcoe North is representative of Ontario, being half urban and half rural, close enough to Metro Toronto to understand its problems but far enough away so that we do not get confused. For a nation with the promise that Canada has, we in Simcoe North are concerned about the way the country is suffering under the Liberals. Our economy should be leading the world. Canada's human and economic resources are second to none, but for too long Liberal administrations have pursued a "buy the vote now, our children pay later" policy. While the Liberals chased a Charter of Rights, Canadians watched their

jobs, their businesses, their homes, their farms, their hopes and their dreams slide down the drain.

● (1110)

Before discussing the budget directly, I want to address the general economic situation facing Canada on budget day. Our unemployment stood at 12.6 per cent, a post-depression record. We had youth unemployment at 21.3 per cent. Over two million Canadians were unemployed or had given up looking for work.

In Midland, Ontario, the *Midland Free Press* reported that a staggering 4,300 people were registered with the Canada Employment Centre. Midland has 33 per cent unemployment.

Canadians wanted a budget that would produce jobs, but they did not get it. Business bankruptcies in Canada in 1982 were 33 per cent higher than in 1981, 63 per cent higher than in 1980 and 91 per cent higher than in 1979. As we can see, business bankruptcies have doubled. The economy of the riding of Simcoe North is based on small business. Canadians wanted a budget that would address the problems of small business. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that they did not get it.

Home owners in Simcoe North, as did home owners everywhere, suffered through the horrendous mortgage interest rates created by the Liberal Party's high interest rate policy. Mortgage interest rates rose as high as 21 per cent and 22 per cent, causing misery to my constituents and to all Canadians during 1981 and 1982. Power of sale and foreclosure proceedings became the order of the day as a result of Liberal policies. Canadians were looking for a provision for the deduction of mortgage interest from taxable income or mortgage interest rate protection in the budget. They got neither.

As I have mentioned, Simcoe North is half rural and half urban. My farm constituents engage in beef and dairy cattle operations as well as in hog and lamb operations. My constituents also grow cash crops. During the past two years farmers have faced the problems that small business faced, including high interest rates and restricted credit. They were looking for a budget that addressed the problems of farmers. The budget did not do that.

What about the taxpayer? Disposable income has shrunk considerably due to inflation and high unemployment. The taxpayers in my riding were not looking for a budget that increased taxes, but it did. The budget increased taxes on the lower and middle class, not directly but in the traditional Liberal way, that is by deception.