

That is what the Minister of Agriculture was quoted as saying, but will he stand up at five o'clock and put the interests of Canadian farmers first, or will he be silently complicitous in budgetary policies which are driving Canadian farmer after Canadian farmer out of business?

My leader mentioned the fact that the hon. member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan (Mr. McRae) also called for the budget to be thrown out. This is what the *Montreal Gazette* of January 23 said about that Ontario member:

Liberal MP—

The article refers to the hon. member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

—has called for the rejection of the federal budget after a stormy meeting with his constituents.

"I think we should throw the basic part of this (budget) out and look at applying it to people who pay no tax on very high income,"—

This was after a stormy meeting, so the hon. member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan wants the budget thrown out. Will he be here today and vote as he said to his constituents he was prepared to do?

What about other Members of Parliament? Will they speak up on behalf of their constituents? I have already mentioned the hon. member for Scarborough Centre. There are other Toronto Liberals as well who have spoken out. In the article to which I referred previously in the *Toronto Star* of January 7 the hon. member for Eglinton-Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille) was quoted as saying he received hundreds of calls and letters, and he promised he would continue to speak up in caucus and write to the Minister of Finance asking that the budget:

—hit the targeted (high-income) people and not the little people.

That is the issue we will decide today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Céline Hervieux-Payette (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity, so obligingly provided by the Progressive Conservative Party, to expand on the action taken by the Liberal members from central and eastern Montreal, who certainly did not need the advice of the members opposite to bring to the attention of the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) the problems existing in their constituencies. As one of the members who signed the letter to the Prime Minister, I feel I should point out that the letter was interpreted in every possible way by the members opposite. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, there is ample proof in *Hansard* that I supported the budget in a speech before this very House, and that at the beginning of last week, I also spoke out in favour of Bill C-89 on residential housing, an important area that was stressed in our letter. For the benefit of my constituents in Montreal-Mercier, I may remind our Progressive Conservative friends that my colleagues and myself, are aware of the economic problems

Supply

existing throughout the world, have vigorously supported the proposal in the MacEachen budget.

Only a few months ago, the official opposition and the business world in general agreed that after inflation, the government's main objective should be to bring down the budget deficit. Mr. Speaker, I think the MacEachen budget took a very vigorous approach to this problem, so that within a few years we can expect to restore the balance and reduce the government's debt load. My constituents in Montreal-Mercier, for instance, know perfectly well that if they borrow too much, their budget won't be able to stand the strain, and they will have to cut their expenses. The Canadian government's attempts to reduce the deficit, which was largely caused by oil compensation payments benefiting Quebecers and the rest of eastern Canada have been well received by my constituents. They realize that reducing the deficit will release funds for use as new investments.

The unemployment situation in Canada is not very optimistic. And it gets even worse when we consider the situation in Quebec. According to Statistics Canada, between 1972 and 1976, in other words, during the pre-separation, pre-independence and pre-Lévesque government period, the unemployment rate was 6.2 in Canada and 7.5 in Quebec. Since the Parti Québécois came to power, unemployment in Canada increased by 1.6, that is from 6.2 to 7.8. However, in Quebec, the unemployment rate is now at 10.2, which means an increase of nearly 3 per cent. To a member from Quebec, these figures are alarming, and that is why members from eastern Montreal took their views and their recommendations to the Prime Minister.

Every week young people come to my constituency office, looking for a job, and that is really what convinced me to sign the letter with my colleagues. At the present time, the federal government has a number of job-creation programs, and our purpose was not to throw out the budget but to make suggestions on improving existing programs in various sectors. These programs, Mr. Speaker, include nearly 11 measures aimed at creating jobs which apply to Quebec. In 1981-82, the programs created 50,798 jobs, which represents some \$107 million. Mr. Speaker, although 50,000 benefited from these programs, which is quite considerable, these measures have been unable to make a significant dent in the present unemployment rate in Quebec. That is why we believe that the budget envelope administered by the Department of Employment and Immigration, could allow for certain funds to be spent directly on creating jobs for young people in order to help integrate them in the job environment. In the final instance, Mr. Speaker, the emphasis should be on measures to promote this process, because the present labour market situation is very tight, for workers as well as for employers.

It would be impossible to list all the reasons why young people have trouble finding jobs, but there is one that all our colleagues are aware of because of the reports made on the