

*The Budget—Mr. Holtmann*

Just to keep the record perfectly clear, federal Conservative Budgets have resulted in tax breaks for upper income earners while heaping on taxes for the average Canadian family. What the New Democratic Government of Manitoba is trying to do is to equalize this. The federal Government has brought so much economic pain to the people of Manitoba and western Canada generally that the Governments of Yukon and Manitoba have had to do whatever they could do to rescue themselves from this very serious situation. I am glad the Hon. Member for Selkirk—Interlake made the point that, thank goodness, we have an NDP Government in Manitoba, otherwise things would be at a point of desperation.

I wish to ask the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) to respond briefly to an observation she has made on a number of occasions in the recent past with respect to a number of economic policies that the present Government has introduced which have caused the wage gap between working Canadian men and women to increase. As of late that situation has actually worsened in terms of bringing about equality in pay returns between men and women. I ask the Hon. Member to respond in that regard.

**Ms. McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I regret to have to comment on this sad fact. This is the first year that Statistics Canada reports that the gap in wages and salaries between women and men has actually increased. Those of us who seek fairness for Canadians, and fairness for women in the workforce, have been very impatient with the progress we have seen in this area. It has been made bit by bit. Sometimes it has amounted to no more than a percentage point, but at least it was going in the right direction. We now see that this trend of painfully slow progress has actually been reversed. Certainly one reason for this of which we know is the lack of access for women to better paying jobs. The ghettoization of women continues. Many of them are confined to part time jobs and cannot get full time jobs. However, we see cut-backs in the areas where women have made their best gains. The Public Service has been a good employer of women. The gains which women have made have been largely in the public sector, in service jobs, and in female professions. They have been good jobs. Women have had unions which have protected them. They have made enormous gains in the last 10 years to 20 years. However, the Government is cutting back in the job areas in which women have made the best gains. Naturally the impact of that is that women are beginning to fall back.

• (1700)

**Mr. Redway:** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the remarks of the Hon. Member. She was highly critical of the Budget, the Government's approach to the economy, its fiscal policy, its employment initiatives, its expenditures, and its taxing policy. I understand that the Hon. Member is a member of the Opposition. Of course the role of the Opposition is to be critical, to be negative, and never to agree with the Government. However, there is another duty on the part of the

Opposition, that is, to put forward some positive and constructive alternatives to the policies of the Government, if it honestly believes that the Government's approach is wrong and can be justifiably criticized.

At the recent convention of the New Democratic Party, I believe her Leader took a very positive stand that what was needed in the country was more jobs. He indicated that that would be an election issue, as far as the New Democratic Party was concerned, in the next federal election.

I would be interested in hearing from the Hon. Member not just generalities that jobs are needed and that what the Government is doing is wrong. Notwithstanding that unemployment has come down very substantially in the last 2.5 years, notwithstanding that interest rates have come down substantially in the last 2.5 years, and notwithstanding that the annual spending deficit has come down very substantially and is still on its way down, the Hon. Member said that our approach was wrong and that other things should be done. I would be interested in hearing the specifics. What would the New Democratic Party do to address the problem of unemployment in such a way as to continue to reduce the budget deficit, or perhaps leave it as it is but, hopefully, not increase it? What specifically would the NDP do in that regard?

**Ms. McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I very much welcome the question. Of course I could go on for a very long time answering it, but I know it is not possible.

The New Democratic Party has outlined and continues to outline in a very positive and concrete way alternative measures. We did this last in a very substantial document entitled "Canada Unlimited", which was our job creation strategy. It outlined all kinds of schemes. There are pages of them. I cannot go into the details at this time, but they included such things as municipal infrastructure spending. Also they included a proposal by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities for an infusion of funds into all kinds of road, sewer, and park improvements. As well, they included community diversification funds for single-industry towns to develop jobs and to keep investment of profits from resource towns to develop spin-off jobs in those communities. They referred to expansion of services, for example, a child care program which would produce a large number of jobs. Cultural spending produces far more jobs. Estimates indicate that there is six times the job spin-off in culture than in other forms of job investment.

These are just a few examples from a very long list which we have outlined. I can certainly see to it that the Hon. Member has a copy of the document, if he would like to have one. Incidentally, these are all costed, and this enormous infusion of jobs into the economy is possible without increasing the deficit at all or with an extremely modest increase in the deficit.

**Mr. Felix Holtmann (Selkirk—Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, indeed it is a pleasure to participate in the debate on the Budget presented recently by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). I enjoy debating in the House of Commons the