

Government Orders

refuses to get involved and the Reform Party of Canada is glad to see Quebec going down the drain.

• (1350)

There is absolutely nothing here for economic recovery. The only solution Ottawa came up with was to go after the unemployed instead of unemployment. The Tory government is obsessed with reducing the deficit and inflation, but all it seems to be doing is prolong the recession. Is this the way to run a country?

Meanwhile, the Minister of Finance has also created a nightmare for employers and employees. According to Mr. Dufour, president of the *Conseil du patronat*, and I quote:

These changes mean we will constantly be going to court. Endless legal challenges. I am not saying this measure is all bad, but I have some questions about the way it will be implemented.

It is bad enough for the government to assume that large numbers of people are cheating on unemployment insurance, but taking money out of the pockets of people who worked hard and need help to get back on their feet is simply the last straw.

Of course, the minister will say that the people who are penalized will be the exception, but now that a certain kind of employer will be able to use blackmail, the whole system can turn into a nightmare for the employee.

I would now like to quote Mr. Gaétan Guérard, president of *Mouvement Action-chômage*:

About 3 per cent of the people on unemployment insurance are freeloaders, and that is par for the course. Most people leave their jobs as a last resort, but now, they may prefer to hang on, which in the long run will be just as bad for the employer.

The changes proposed by the Minister of Finance will not create jobs or replace jobs that were lost, so they are no help at all. These changes are supposed to improve the country's economy. However, the federal government is actually transferring to the provinces the burden of supporting all these people who will end up on welfare. What a strange way to make Canada competitive and prosperous.

After eight years of mismanagement by this Conservative government, the country really needs a responsible government to take charge. It is high time for us to take

power to get this country back on its feet. Canada is on a downward slide and we must at all costs stop this slide before we completely lose control.

The government in office was elected because it promised a growing economy, jobs, jobs, jobs, prosperity and a decreasing deficit. What did it deliver? Just the opposite. The country could hardly be in worse shape. Companies are closing left and right, young people no longer believe in tomorrow and more and more people in their forties find themselves with nothing after their jobs were completely wiped out.

Taxes continue to rise, salaries are frozen, inflation is still rising and this government tells us to have confidence. They want us to have faith in its management. That is really making fun of us.

The country can no longer live with band-aid solutions that solve nothing; it is time to take drastic action and to dare to have guts. It is time to take charge of this country, to work with business and to build a promising future.

It is high time to listen and especially to implement the Auditor General's recommendations.

It is high time to stop duplication and give Quebec and other provinces that want it jurisdiction over manpower training and development. It is high time to call an election and let the people choose a new government to run this country.

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member said it was time her party came to power to straighten out the economy in this country. Could the hon. member describe the principles and policies that would form the basis for her party's decisions?

First of all, will she increase spending and borrowing? Will she cut or increase revenue? I would like some details on what she expects to do in the way of programs.

Mrs. Maheu: I want to thank the hon. member for Lévis for this opportunity to remind the House of the program suggested by the Leader of the Opposition. To create jobs, we asked for infrastructure projects that would help our provincial and municipal governments and in the process kick-start the economy. The government considered this, but it has only provided for overhauling two bridges in Montreal. That's all it amounts to.