The Member cannot get his mind around that subject. He and the Government do not care about the losers. This Budget is disgusting because it does not anticipate the problems which will be faced by those who will lose. No one denies that. Even the Macdonald Royal Commission said that there will be losers and for that reason we must build in protection through guaranteed income supplements, unemployment insurance, and other mechanisms, a new social system which will protect the losers. No one denies that there will be losers.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The period provided for questions and comments has now expired. Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Richelieu (Mr. Plamondon).

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Madam Speaker, I would also like to take part in this debate on the Budget, because I think it is the first time Canadians have been given a real Budget Speech. This is not a speech to amend the Income Tax Act. It is not a speech to announce taxes. It is not a speech that keeps changing the Government's tax system. It is a speech that clearly describes, as a Budget Speech should, the state of the nation, in other words, the state of Canada's economy as a result of the policies we introduced three years ago. It is a speech that clearly describes the progress this Government has made since 1984, and its conclusions are such that we can look forward to the future with great optimism.

I was very surprised when the previous speaker quoted the Macdonald Report, since the report in question was in favour of free trade. Of course, they can always quote that part of the Report that suits their own particular ends, but the general tenor of the Macdonald Report was that the Government had no choice but to opt for a free trade agreement with the United States.

However, I found it most refreshing to hear my Conservative colleague's question to the previous speaker, when he said: You keep criticizing, but what kind of economic policy do you have to offer? What is the Official Opposition's economic policy? What is the New Democrtic Party's economic policy? They have nothing on paper, saying what their budget would be like and how they would proceed if they were to form the Government. Not a word. We keep hearing negative criticism, never anything constructive. However, they tend to forget the approach taken by the previous Government. At the time, its budgets were more like amendments to the income tax than a proper budget speech. All we heard was more taxes. The deficit rose from $13 billion to $38 billion in three years. And they even neglected to bring down budgets for as long as sixteen months.

At one point, we had a forecast deficit of $10 billion, which turned out to be $20 billion. Today, however, the forecast is for a deficit of $30 billion, Canadians can count on the deficit being $30 billion. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), in co-operation with Treasury Board, has provided for an ongoing review of the issues and the Government's economic policies, a truly admirable initiative that does not deserve the negative and destructive criticism we have been hearing today.

This morning, previous speakers often mentioned free trade. I shall, if I may, quote from an editorial in today's *La Presse*, which is about free trade and the partisan analysis we are being given instead of the rational approach we need to an economic analysis as important as this one, especially when the future of all Canadians is at stake. Our friend Frédéric Wagnière said, and I quote:

> Nobody ever said the Free Trade Agreement with the United States was perfect. The version initialled last October was very vague, and the text signed by the Prime Minister still requires some clarification—
>
> However, that is no reason for throwing out the baby with the bath water, like some politicians on both sides of the border—

The politicians on this side of the border being, of course, the Opposition and the NDP.

> —are inclined to do. With all its flaws, the Agreement enjoys considerable support.

And a little further in his article which I found very perceptive, he added:

> The greatest threat to the Free Trade Agreement comes not from the United States but from partisan politics in Canada which may soon turn into electioneering. The federal Government intends to table enabling legislation this spring. Considering the obstruction we can expect from the Opposition Parties, consideration and passage of this legislation by the House of Commons and the Senate may take very long indeed;

Here we have an editorial writer who clearly says that the partisan attitude and blinker mentality of the Opposition Parties is extremely harmful to Canada's economic development and that free trade is the only viable short or long term solution for the Government and for creating jobs. In fact, this Government can be proud of its record, since as one of my colleagues said this morning, it has created the most jobs of any government in recent years.

As I said earlier, this Budget Speech differs from the kind we are accustomed to hear, because it tells us exactly what the situation is. It tells Canadians what they will have to do and what they can expect from the Government, and it tells us exactly what course the Government will take to provide for the economic well-being of Canadians. Furthermore, the Budget is a clear demonstration of this Government's successful economic record.

For instance, concerning international policies that are regularly discussed by the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), through CIDA, and the involvement of Canadian business people in those matters, this has ensured that CIDA's upgading is now being perceived throughout French—and English—speaking nations in Africa especially. Economic indicators are a clear proof of that—whether it be interest rates, unemployment, housing starts, or investments which have doubled since this Conservative Government came to power, whether the volume of exports, of course, the renewed confidence of potential investors from