

The Budget—Mr. Hopkins

Mr. Hawkes: I wanted to make a comment, because the NDP was on its feet so quickly as the protector of the poor. My maiden speech in the Chamber followed the Budget which was brought down by the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) when he was Minister of Finance in 1979. He brought a Budget into the Chamber which the Canadian Welfare Council said was the fairest Budget to the poor people of the nation in the decade of the seventies. At that time, the NDP moved a motion which tossed out that Budget. It reached an unholy alliance with the Liberal Party of Canada and succeeded in tossing out a Government on a Budget which was viewed by the Canadian Welfare Council and other analysts as the fairest Budget to poor people in the decade of the seventies. I would like to say to all new Members in the Chamber that when NDP Members stand up and try to portray themselves as the champions of senior citizens, they are talking to somebody whom I have not yet met. Every senior citizen whom I have encountered wants to be a part of society and wants to contribute to the nation. Senior citizens understand that the contribution of 3 per cent will let them do their part to ensure that in 1990 they will not be \$3,000 more in debt than they are today. That is what the Budget is about. That is what the Hon. Member has outlined. He knows that senior citizens want to be a part of the country and not hived off into some Never Never Land.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period for questions and comments has now terminated. I will now recognize the Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) on debate.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes), who has just finished his remarks, that the senior citizens of Canada know that the Liberal Party has done more for them over the years and has made them a real part of society than any Party in the country.

Mr. Siddon: They voted you out, Len.

Mr. Hopkins: I can understand that my comment hurts, because everyone wants to be a hero.

During election campaigns, promises are made by candidates. Promises are also made by potential Prime Ministers. There is always a certain amount of distrust on the part of the public toward politicians, and that is sometimes justified by the results.

On August 22, 1984, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) sent a telex to the Progressive Conservative candidate in my riding. That telex was eventually transformed into a newspaper ad which was accompanied by a picture of the present Prime Minister. The article was entitled: "The P.C. Commitment to Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories." The article read:

Since September 1945, when Canada's first civil reactor started to produce energy at the Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories, Canada's nuclear power program has grown with each new step—the NPD at Rolphton, Douglas Point and finally Pickering—to become the most successful nuclear power system in the world, CANDU.

That was stated by the late Hon. C. D. Howe. However, the Prime Minister did not mention Mr. C. D. Howe in the article. The article continued:

Chalk River has been the heart and soul of this nuclear program. A P.C. government will not only maintain this facility, it will consider providing additional funds to allow greater Canadian involvement in the massive fusion energy projects underway in other countries, building on the Laboratory's experience with tritium-based fusion cycles.

The future of Chalk River is closely linked to our Party's commitment to research and development. We will develop a co-ordinated approach to government-sponsored research, strengthening the linkages between public sector and private sector research activities, and setting priorities in close consultation with provincial governments engaged in similar research.

As a final comment, the Prime Minister's ad stated:

This is the Progressive Conservative commitment: Job security for you—and jobs for your children.

Then we came to reality, the Budget which was brought down last week, and are told the results of that firm commitment. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) slashed research and development funding for Atomic Energy of Canada Limited from the present \$200 million level down to \$100 million by 1990. Since more than \$110 million of the current \$200 million goes to Chalk River—

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Siddon) on a point of order.

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member would not want to mislead the House on this matter. He has cited from the Budget and alleged that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) slashed research and development funding to AECL by \$100 million. I would challenge the Hon. Member to produce such a quote or statement from the Budget. Indeed, it is not true.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is a point of debate. I believe that the Hon. Minister and the Hon. Member will have a chance to go at it during the period which is allotted for questions and comments.

Mr. Hopkins: The Minister should read his Party's Budget. Since more than \$110 million of the current \$200 million goes to Chalk River, and provides 75 per cent of its total budget, the planned cuts to AECL will have a devastating effect on the laboratory the Prime Minister promised in writing not only to maintain, but possibly to consider expanding. Another \$70 million was taken out of the company's earned savings.

If AECL's research and development effort is decimated every year until 1990, as the Budget of the Minister of Finance requires, the loss to Canada in scientific and technical capability will be enormous. If we as Canadians continue to accept the breaking of promises as a politician's right, we stand to lose as much in our nation's character.

Only two years ago, a study by the U.S. Office of Naval Research pointed to AECL as the second most productive organization outside the United States in one field alone—basic physics. The only institution with a better record was in