

The Budget—Mr. Langdon

act on it. I think, Mr. Speaker, that has taken political courage and responsibility.

Mr. McGuire: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Hon. Member agrees with the Department of National Defence cut-backs in his own province and in the rest of the Atlantic area along with VIA Rail cut-backs and changes in UIC. I would like to ask him about the veterans and the people in his province who volunteered in the first and second world wars, especially from Prince Edward Island. After their sacrifices made during wartime, does he not think they deserve, or the province that they served deserve to have some share in the spending of defence dollars?

Mr. Bird: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there is any Hon. Member in this House who relishes or receives with any sense of satisfaction the cuts in defence spending or VIA Rail or any other cuts. It would be nice to be able to afford to continue with everything we have on the go and then some, but as I stated earlier, the order of priority of our financial position is paramount. So cuts had to be made. As I said in my remarks, there is nothing in my heart, nor in the hearts of my constituents, but compassion and understanding for the citizens of Summerside and Portage la Prairie. I certainly do not like the defence cuts, but as the higher order of priority, I do support the Budget. I do support the direction of fiscal responsibility that we are pursuing. I do believe that we must do everything we can to assist those people in Summerside with the adjustment. I do not know what that will take, but I believe we will find a way to ease the pain as much as we possibly can.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Since there are no more questions or comments, the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) on debate.

• (1530)

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, at the start of speeches it is customary to make some comments which are a little lighter than those that follow. I am especially concerned about doing that because recently I have been accused of having too much *gravitas*. I must say that I have been desperately looking for something which one could joke about with respect to the Budget. It is difficult, but I did come across a comment which sums up reasonably well my approach to this speech and to the Budget. It is from Will Rogers. He stated: "I don't make jokes. I just watch the Government and report the facts".

It becomes a source of immense amusement, I am

afraid, to those of us who watch the Government and report the facts to our constituents and to the rest of the country, to see a Government which consistently does the same misguided things over and over again, and a Government, faced with the choice between something sensible and something foolish, inevitably and consistently opts for something foolish.

For instance, as we look at the Budget we see certain realities with respect to employment, realities which have marked the Government's approach right from its election in 1984. With its first economic statement, the Government effectively said to Canadians that it would not put the emphasis on what it promised during the 1984 election campaign, reaching full employment in this country. Instead it would put the emphasis on helping those wealthy corporations and rich individuals who provided the cash to get the Government into office. That approach persisted in 1985 in the first major Budget brought forward by the Government. That Budget took the approach of attacking old age pensioners, rather than attempting to do something about achieving real fairness.

Close to five years after the election of 1984 as we look at the realities with respect to employment, what do we see? For the first time in the past three years we see an increase in unemployment and, for the first time in the past three years, we see a decrease in full-time jobs for the prime labour force. The Government likes to refer to those who are 25 years of age and over. In fact, if we look at the entire workforce we see a decrease in employment, comparing March 1989 to April 1989, of 54,000 people whose jobs have been lost.

This is the same Government that promised that the Free Trade Agreement would bring us new jobs, extra jobs, and expansion in terms of employment. The Government now has to face the reality that the number of jobs is shrinking, employment is decreasing, and the consequences are appearing of those 30,000 job losses which can be traced directly to free trade. There have been shutdowns at Northern Telecom and shutdowns at Inglis in the constituency of my seat-mate, the Hon. Member from Spadina. There have been cut-backs in my constituency at places such as Arnold Manufacturing and Helin Tackle. In each case those cut-backs can be associated with jobs being shifted from this country to the United States.