

The Budget—Mr. Evans

economic growth and development that will come out of this period of great difficulty that we are now experiencing.

I also suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that my assessment of the budget and the effects of the budget is not significantly different from that of the vast majority of the Members of this House. I base that assessment on my reading of the speeches given by Members of both Parties opposite. That reading indicates that they are grasping at straws to find areas of great criticism, except for certain Members of one Party who believe that if the Government did not increase the deficit by an additional \$10 billion it was doing nothing and was showing no care. I disagree violently with that position because I do not think it is a rational criticism of the position of the Government.

Others have been very reluctant to come forward with hard criticisms of the policies. Yesterday afternoon I listened to speeches criticizing Government policies that have been in place for six months or a year. There was very little discussion on the new innovative, creative and effective policies put forward in the budget.

This is a budget debate, Mr. Speaker. If the motion put forward by the Minister is to the effect that the House confirm its confidence in the economic policy put forward by the Government in its budget, then why is it that the Opposition, which is trying to criticize Government policy, refuses to deal in any serious way with the measures put forward in that budget? The answer to that question is obviously because they have a difficult time finding anything with which to take issue and very few things to criticize.

That reaction in the House is simply an honest reflection of the reaction the Government is getting from other parts of the Canadian community. I refer to such organizations as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Organization of Small Business, and the United Way with regard to the charitable donation changes.

● (1125)

The wide range of opinion in this country outside of this Chamber is that the budget is appropriate. It is a good budget. It is going to help us make progress in our fight towards economic recovery. That is the fact, Mr. Speaker. Outside of this Chamber of criticism the public is saying that this budget is a good budget, the policy is a sound policy and economic recovery will be promoted by this budget, that job creation will be far ahead of what it would have been without this budget, that we are going to see progress in overcoming unemployment, that we are going to maintain our fight against inflation, that interest rates will be such that will stimulate economic growth, that we will be moving into renewed prosperity as a result of this budget.

The Opposition cannot find specific criticisms of this budget. They have to argue in generalities about policies which have been in place for a year or more. This indicates to me that not only do the Opposition honestly, in their heart of

hearts, believe what I am saying today to be the case, but they are also smart enough to understand that the public is going to give them very little credence if they stand in the House and say something that is diametrically opposed to what is being said outside of this Chamber. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I believe we will see over the next week that this is one of the meekest budget debates by the Opposition we have seen for many years.

The Minister has brought forward a budget which brings forward necessary public works. It stimulates investment, which means growth will be stimulated. It has provided measures to expand the equity base of this economy, measures which are dramatically needed to remove businesses from their dependence on debt, which in turn will make them less susceptible to interest rate changes. The budget adds to the stimulus in the housing sector. It addresses direct job creation as well as improves on the training programs to provide jobs in the future for our young people. It provides many new incentives for research and development which, in my particular area of the country, is terribly important. I am enthused and excited, and the people in my area in the high technology industry and in research and development are enthused and excited also, about what the Government did the other night in the budget. All of these things are going to mean economic growth, increased job creation and a reduction in unemployment, which is precisely what the people as well as the Opposition have been calling for some time.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I commend the Government and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) for bringing down a very good budget, one appropriate for the times, one which is going to do the job. In the last few minutes I have heard Hon. Members opposite commenting across the floor. There is a ten-minute question period and I welcome their questions at this time.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member. I do not often engage in the question period but I could not help but feel, as I listened to the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans), that he displayed a remarkable ignorance about what is happening across the country.

I readily admit that there are features in the budget which will benefit Ottawa. But Ottawa is not necessarily a reflection of what is happening across the country. I say to the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre that there is a desperate need for some of the people behind the scenes who are promoting this kind of budget to get their backsides out of Ottawa for awhile and find out what is happening in western Canada, in eastern Canada and in the rest of central Canada.

● (1130)

However, let me be specific. The Hon. Member recognizes that one of the problems this country does not face is a lack of productive capacity. Therefore, what possible purpose is there in providing incentives to create additional productive capacity?