

The Budget

What should we think about this budget, when the government is reaching into the wallets of senior citizens. They have paid their share all their lives and now that they are retired, all they deserve is to see their income cut back. I think the media were very clear on this. I would be pleased to hear the hon. member explain to me how this is going to improve the quality of life of Canadians.

Also, how can he say the deficit is under control, when it is the highest that any government dared make public? I am willing to make a bet with the hon. member that, next year, when we get the figures for the fiscal year, the deficit will be \$45 billion rather than \$39 as forecast, because the Liberals were not willing to take their responsibilities and reduce the duplications.

• (1120)

[English]

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

The budget is very much about the quality of life. It contains numerous programs, many of which I have focused on, that are all about the quality of life: our youth, the jobs they must have, the retraining that must take place and the preservation of the social programs that he referred to in a sensible way which contributes to getting people back into the workforce.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I appreciate some of the comments the member made in reference to the response of people to a government that does not listen. I keep wondering how things are changing right now when we are faced with that very situation. Government is not listening to the people.

Many have expressed concerns about the massive debt that keeps building up. The budget has just been released and it amounts to a situation now where in the next three years we will have an additional \$100 billion in debt. That certainly does not reflect what the people are demanding. A threat hangs over the head of every taxpayer in the country. There is now going to be a service charge to be paid, again on the backs of the taxpayer.

What is going to happen? Are we going to have additional tax burdens again affecting the quality of life? How caring will the government be when forced by lenders to curtail its spending? If we do not get a handle on it now, what is going to happen in the next three years when the lenders say that enough is enough?

I would appreciate the member responding to how caring the government will be after failing to take immediate action. It will be a much greater crisis in the future.

Mr. Campbell: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

There are no tax increases in the budget and I have every confidence, unlike the hon. member and some of his colleagues,

that we are up to the challenge. I am not sitting on the edge of my seat waiting for the total collapse of this country. I am shouldering my burden along with my colleagues on this side of the House and the few who are over there in getting on and in getting the job done.

Mr. Benoît Serré (Timiskaming—French River): Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the House this morning on this important matter of my government's first budget.

For the past few weeks, I have sat in the House, listening to the many statements, questions and speeches made by my colleagues on both sides of the House. I was struck by one fact. No matter how different our approaches and methods and no matter which region of Canada we originate from, we all share something in common: a strong sense of duty to our constituents.

For me my riding will always come first. I want to thank the people of Timiskaming—French River for putting their faith in me. I want to tell each and every one of them how proud and honoured I feel to be their voice here in Ottawa.

Many of my colleagues on both sides of the House have addressed specific issues in relation to the budget speech today. I would like to restrict my comments to two areas which I feel have more direct consequences to my riding: mining and agriculture.

My riding of Timiskaming—French River is largely a rural riding. It is vast in size and stretches from Matheson and Kirkland Lake in the north to the French River of Alban and Noelville in the south. It is a riding that has been developed by the forestry, mining and agricultural sectors. Although tourism offers great potential it remains relatively undeveloped.

Unfortunately as a result of the poor mining policy of the previous government and the cancellation of mining incentives by the Conservatives in 1987, for the first time in its history Cobalt has no operating mine. The Adams mine in Kirkland Lake and the Sherman mines in Temagami, two iron ore pellet producing mines, closed in 1990. Dofasco through very questionable circumstances now buys its iron ore pellets in the former Prime Minister's riding.

• (1125)

Permit me to state a few facts and statistics on the mining industry in Canada. The first big myth is that mining is only important to a few remote areas of the country. This could not be further from the truth. The mining industry is the cornerstone of our economy, accounting for approximately 16 per cent of total exports, 4.6 per cent of gross domestic product and 100,000 high paying, skilled jobs. More jobs are created in urban centres from services and supply to the mining industry than in the actual mining communities.