

said he would do something. I watched him in another arena. I watched him at the provincial level when he was in Opposition. He made the same kind of criticisms then about the public debt that he is making now about the deficit. I remember how he pointed out to the Newfoundland people across the island, in Labrador and in the House of Assembly that the Liberal Government of the then Premier Joey Smallwood had taken Newfoundland from a surplus position in 1949 and had put it \$900 million in debt in 22 years. He told us all that he would do something about that. He did, Mr. Speaker. He got his chance. When the Tories came to power he became the Minister of Finance. Two and a half years later, when he left that portfolio, I want the House to understand in fairness to him that the public debt was no longer \$900 million—those big, bad Liberals had taken it from nothing to \$900 million in 22 years—after two and a half years under his financial stewardship, the public debt was nothing near \$900 million. It was \$2.1 billion. The Hon. Member did something, all right. He more than doubled the public debt of the Province, single handedly, in about one-tenth of the time it had taken the Liberals. Take the man at his word, Mr. Speaker. He will do something about the deficit. He will drive it right through the roof.

● (1630)

I remember when the Hon. Member for St. John's West became the Minister of Finance in Newfoundland. One of the things he was very upset about was that the former Premier, Mr. Smallwood, had made what looked like a very sweet deal with Canadian Javelin. He had sold them two large dormitory buildings for about \$350,000, two empty shells for \$350,000. The Hon. Member for St. John's West thought that was a small sum of money and that he could do better. He regarded that as a pittance, so he bought the buildings back. He paid \$350,000 of government money and got the buildings back so that he could make more money for the taxpayers. He then put them on tender. He had trouble selling them but eventually he sold one for \$1.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. In order to understand where the finance critic for the Tories is coming from and how valid his commitments are, you have to understand how he delivered in the past. I have been watching him for a number of years—and he is a man you have to watch very closely. I have watched his rhetoric and his actions and every time, without fail, he does something—but I am not sure the taxpayers are any better off for what he does.

Who is this wise man from the East, Mr. Speaker? Is he as smart as he sounds? Yes, he is. Does he know all he says he does? Yes, he does. The problem is not how smart he is or how much he knows, it is the machiavellian things he does with that smartness which makes the country so ill served by his being in public life.

I hope, Mr. Speaker—and I shall work to this end—that the people of Canada never again have inflicted upon them the kind of performance that the Hon. Member for St. John's West is capable of. In Newfoundland we know through bitter

experience how terrible that can be. We owe it to the people of Newfoundland and the people of all Canada to see that we do not have that kind of thing inflicted on us.

This is a good Budget, Mr. Speaker. It is a Budget I can support with a heart and a half. It will keep the economic recovery going. It is a Budget for the poor, a Budget for the jobless, a Budget to keep us back on the track to good economic recovery.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Questions, comments? Debate. The Hon. Member for Pembina (Mr. Elzinga).

**Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina):** Mr. Speaker, like the previous Member, I wish to compare this Budget with the Budget we introduced in 1979. My analysis will be somewhat different from that which the Hon. Member opposite just shared with the Chamber.

I think that the amendment we are debating and on which we will vote at 5.45 this evening bears repeating, Mr. Speaker. It reads as follows:

This House regrets the failure of the government to present measures designed to reduce Canada's budgetary deficit, lower existing high interest rates, reduce crippling high levels of unemployment or to create meaningful pension reform all of which are needed as a result of years of government economic mismanagement and condemns the government for its continued misuse of public funds and arrogant maladministration which have led to a crisis in public trust and confidence in government.

I wish to review some of the things that the National Progressive Conservative Party has put in place so that when our friends opposite have the courage to call a general election and we have the opportunity to govern the nation, we will be ready.

Our Leader, the Hon. Member for Central Nova (Mr. Mulroney), has put together five very important task forces. One relates to job opportunities for Canada's youth, because traditionally unemployment levels for that sector of our society are twice the national average. We have positive recommendations on how to correct those high unemployment levels. We also have a task force relating to Crown corporation accountability. We plan to reform the legislation under which Crown corporations now function so that they will be accountable not only to Parliament but to the Canadian people. A third task force deals with productivity enhancement in the public and private sectors. We need to find ways to increase productivity in the country if we are to improve our economy. The fourth is something that the Budget touched upon, and that is, tax simplification. The complexity of the tax legislation and tax forms is something that needs to be changed. We will develop ways of simplifying both the tax forms and the legislation. The fifth task force will examine manpower retraining. At the present time the retraining programs in the country are inadequate. We want to develop the means of putting manpower retraining programs in place, ones that are functional and ones that will be suitable to all sectors of our society.

Just a short while ago we announced a comprehensive 10 point agricultural policy. A recent press release of the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) touched on that policy. As a national party we would eliminate the 9 per cent