

*The Budget—Mr. Rodriguez*

Keeping in mind that three out of four of the Atlantic Governments are Conservative, how have they reacted to the third Budget of the Tory Government? Premier Buchanan of Nova Scotia said:

I was quite frankly very, very disappointed that the Budget didn't address what I thought was going to be one of the major items, and that was the Atlantic provinces agency . . . There is very little in the Budget for the Atlantic region at a time when we needed (something) very badly . . . Ontario is doing very well, thank you, but the Atlantic Provinces are not doing that well, and it's most unfortunate that the Budget didn't address that.

He went on to say:

Unfortunately—restraint is having a rather devastating effect on the Atlantic Provinces . . . The remedy they're using to cure a problem in Ontario is causing pneumonia down here.

**Mr. Keeper:** We need a new doctor.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** We need to fire the doctor. No one can accuse *The Telegraph-Journal* of being a socialist paper, yet it had this to say in its February 20 editorial:

"There's nothing there for Atlantic Canada," said Normand Corno, president of the New Brunswick Chamber of Commerce.

"Something of a non-event" said Donald Hackett, president of the Saint John Board of Trade.

Tim McCarthy, president of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, said: "I think the minister ignored regional disparities."

Even Yvon Poitras, chairman of the New Brunswick government's Board of Management—and a politician of the same PC stripe as Mr. Wilson—was openly critical. He agreed with business and labour that the Wilson budget "does nothing" for New Brunswick.

The Halifax *Chronicle-Herald* said, in its editorial of February 20, 1987, that:

—Mr. Wilson did not even reaffirm the government's commitment to the agency in the budget speech.

So far, the AEP has been bogged down by bureaucratic red tape and unworkable guidelines, according to both the business community and independent economists.

The AEP has generated publicity, but only because Millie's Chips became frustrated with its dealings with the AEP bureaucracy, and decided to locate a new plant in Ontario instead of Port Hawkesbury.

What does the editorial of the St. John's evening *Telegram* say? It says:

Two areas of concern for this province, the fishery and the offshore, were not addressed. There were no announcements on prospects of reducing regional disparity nor was there anything to indicate the province's horrendous jobless rate would be reduced.

Mr. Wilson describes his budget as a breathing space budget prior to proposals for major tax reform later this year.

It sounds to me not like breathing space but like strangulation. It is strangling the Atlantic region. The headline on the St. John's evening *Telegram* editorial was: "Atlantic area must wait". The editorial goes on to point out:

Help is on the way, he said, but he considers Atlantic Canadians to be unreasonable for having expectations that it would come in time for the budget.

It is central Canada which is booming and the finance minister insists Atlantic Canada will benefit from that boom.

In other words, what's good for central Canada is good for all Canadians.

It is called the trickle down theory. Remember, this Government was supposed to bring unity. The Government has representation in the House. It has 211 seats from coast to coast.

• (1740)

**Mr. Nunziata:** And what has it brought?

**Mr. Rodriguez:** It has brought nothing but division and disunity to the country in 2.5 short years. The Conservatives wonder why they are low in the polls. I want to reiterate that it is not the scandals. It is their ignoring of regional disparities and their willingness to focus only on where there is already economic development, which is basically in southern Ontario.

Northern Ontario remains a source of raw materials, as do Atlantic Canada and the West. The trickle down theory of stimulating southern Ontario and hopefully some crumbs will fall to the east, the west, and the north is not acceptable.

At some point the revolution is coming. We in Atlantic Canada, we in northern Ontario, and we in the west will say that we are not satisfied with the crumbs. We want to share in the meal. We will take our chairs and draw ourselves closer to the table so that we can participate in the meal, not accept the crumbs.

I am not here to convert the Tories. I am here to preach the word that unless the Government repents, the day of judgment is at hand. They should pay close attention to what Canadians are telling them.

I have quoted the reactions in Atlantic Canada. They are not from New Democrat oriented editorials and leadership in Atlantic Canada. They are from people of their own stripe.

I say to the Government that the time has come. It must put aside its concept which sees southern Ontario, particularly Toronto, as the hallelujah for all Canada. I say right now that the Government must pay attention to regional disparities which exist in Canada and do something about them now before it is too late.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any questions or comments?

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly, the question is the following one.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre), seconded by Mr. Mazankowski, moved:

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.