

*Government Orders*

can be sure that in my region, in the Lower St. Lawrence, the Gaspé and the islands, everyone understands what it means.

This bill does not bring into question Canada's structure but rather the efficiency of this government. It offers a number of little recipes, of mini-measures, that did not convey to anybody the message that the first budget of the Liberal government would really emphasize job creation. They decided to give a little to everyone and tried to get by on a traditional economic recovery.

Although these people call themselves experts and say they are concerned about the economy, I think there is a lack of vision. They did not see that North America and the entire Western world are currently undergoing deep structural changes and that such measures will not provide Quebec and Canada with the tools they need to hold their own in the new global economy.

I think that Bill C-17 is unacceptable. I am thinking especially of members who represent ridings in eastern Canada. Personally, if I were a member from the Maritimes and I voted for this bill, I think that I would find the coming summer, fall and winter very long, because after the summer when a few seasonal jobs are available, people will face the fall and winter and, if they did not work the minimum number of weeks, they will end up on welfare. They will have less to spend on consumer goods and this will affect the whole economy of eastern Canada.

If this had been presented by a Conservative government, we would have said that they were keeping their commitments, people elected them for that, we may agree or not, but they would be doing what was expected of them. But this is presented by a government that said it would be different, a different kind of government that would change things and take a different approach to the economy and make job creation a priority. And nowhere do we find any of these things there.

All we find, and I think that I will conclude with this, is a budget whose only purpose is to make some lenders feel secure and it does not even achieve this result.

• (1255)

The people who lend money to Canada now did not applaud this budget; they just said that they thought the real Liberal budget would come next year. There was no Liberal budget, it is the same as the Conservatives'. The message given to the senior federal public service is that things are all right and that we will continue as before; with this government, we will continue to pass on our good figures, our good results, and our vision of development, whereas the people who were elected, especially the 200 or so new members, whatever their party, certainly came

here to manage Canada differently from the way it was run in the past and to make Canadians feel that changes were being made.

If they said that they would tackle unemployment head on, it would have had a small effect on inflation, but I think that the people would have been prepared to accept it because they have suffered so much from the negative consequences of unemployment. A whole generation was sacrificed. When you look at the résumé of someone who is 25, 30 or 35 years old, you see that they worked on a project for three months, then were unemployed for six months, worked on another small project for two months and then were jobless for a year. That generation will not have the skills needed to take over when the time comes.

Bill C-17 is important for the government, because it will be judged by it. The people in our communities will not say that Bill C-17 is a bad piece of legislation. Instead, they will say that the Liberal government does not keep its promises or its commitments and that it has absolutely no credibility. The people will easily come to those conclusions, because they can expect nothing concrete to come out of these measures, nothing that would prove that economic recovery is on the way.

We will eventually achieve economic recovery if the government decides to launch initiatives that bring all stakeholders to focus clearly on one priority, job creation. By telling small employers that, in 1994, they will get \$3.07 for every \$100, the government is sending them the message that they need not put so much emphasis on job creation, because it is not giving them the flexibility they need to create more jobs.

All of the provisions included in Bill C-17, whether it is the increase in the number of insurable weeks to become eligible for UI benefits, the reduction in the weeks of benefit, the salary freeze for civil servants, or the unaccountable borrowing authority given to the CBC, send out a very clear message to Canadians, which is that the current government has decided not to honour its commitments, but instead to watch the economy from the sidelines rather than play an active role in this area.

[English]

**Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated the remarks of my colleague opposite and I listened to them with great attention. I certainly appreciate the sincerity with which he made many of his points and I think all of us on all sides of the House are very conscious of the fact that any changes to unemployment insurance have to be done with great care and forethought. Certainly to extend the number of weeks of eligibility for unemployment insurance is to bring a certain amount of hardship to some people.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he feels that unemployment insurance as a concept is something sacrosanct, that can never be touched, that can never be reformed. We really