

*The Budget—Mr. Wilson*

while. This year with \$100,000 there was sufficient money only for three or four projects, which causes a lot of frustration and anger. I do not know what the Minister can do about this. It is not a good program when we build up peoples' hopes and they go to all the trouble of getting worthwhile projects only to find them dashed to the ground because of insufficient money.

**Mr. Roberts:** Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the Hon. Member for recognizing the work done by the civil servants in my Department. Quite often brickbats are thrown at us and it is very nice to have a bouquet when it is deserved, and I will pass along the Hon. Member's comments to the relevant officers.

Second, we did increase very substantially the funding for the Summer Canada programs last year. My recollection is that it was increased by \$70 million. The amount of funding provided this year so far is equal to that funding. I know there are always more expectations than can be fulfilled. Indeed, as I noted in my remarks, another \$150 million has been added for youth employment programs generally. There is clearly the possibility that we could consider using some of that funding to expand once more the summer employment program. I am not guaranteeing Hon. Members of the House that that will happen, but I note that it is a possibility. I hope he will not find himself overwhelmed by the expectations. We have tried to make people aware of the programs. The funding has been substantially increased in previous years. The quality of projects being suggested is even higher. That may reflect the fact that we have made people more aware of the programs than perhaps has been the case in the past.

● (1540)

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the Budget debate because I believe the Budget itself gives us as clear a picture as we could possibly expect of why we need a change in government and why we have to move in different directions. I say this not just because of the matters we have raised in the House in the last few months about the way Revenue Canada has been run or is totally out of control or about the way the Government has manipulated taxpayers' funds to favour those ridings that have happened to elect Liberals. I do not say this because of the action taken by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) in making public a confidential discussion between the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) and one of his public servants. I do not say this just because Canadians have been turned off by the Liberal Party. I say it because the Government today is totally avoiding the major issues.

Let us look at some of them. In the medicare issue, they have focused on two narrow parts of the overall issue. They have done so entirely for political reasons—to raise the level of fear on the part of elderly Canadians and Canadians with health problems. In terms of the peace issue, the matter has been dealt with primarily by raising the whole issue of the fear Canadians have about the possibility of nuclear war. They have not dealt with some of the more substantive elements of

the issue. Now we have in the Budget a clear example of how the Minister is dealing with the peripheral issues while avoiding some of the major substantive issues which are causing the very serious problems we face in the country.

I do not think any of us would disagree that in the Budget the peripheral issues have been brought forward, such as the question of pension reform particularly, and the treatment of single elderly women and the adequacy of their pensions. We have been in favour of tax simplification for a number of years now. We are pleased that the Government is starting to unwind the very serious damage it has inflicted upon the economy, particularly upon individuals and small-businessmen, in the 1981 and 1983 Budgets which added, between them, 600 pages of legislative amendments to a tax Act which prior to that consisted of some 875 pages. There is a slight change for the better in the Budget, but we still have a long way to go. There are some initiatives to address the problems we have been raising about the administration of Revenue Canada and the initiation of a study on profit sharing of which we on this side of the House have been in favour. We are supportive of these initiatives, but we have to recognize that most of them are not law. They are initiating the consultative process. We must take into account the past practices of the Government as it approached an election. "Let us put some of these on the table", they say. "Let us put them on the table and ask for some comments", they say, because it allows the Government to avoid addressing the problem and making decisions which will bring into effect changes Canadians would like to see. We do not have any confidence whatsoever that there will be substantive changes made in these areas prior to the election.

I would like to address one of the peripheral changes, that is the proposal for mortgage interest insurance. This addresses the symptom of the problem, not the cause. It is very expensive for the taxpayer or the home owner to purchase this mortgage interest insurance. However, I underline the fact that the problem is not addressed by this particular proposal. The problem is high interest rates and the lack of control which the Government has demonstrated over its monetary policy. We have seen more than a few instances where interest rates in Canada have risen far higher than they should have. I will address one element of this later in my remarks.

The problem is that the Government has addressed these peripheral issues in the Budget and has ignored the very major issues of the federal Government deficit and the declining international competitive position of our industry. Lip service merely is given to these problems. It is the same lip service we have seen in budget after budget, but no action is taken on the problems which lead directly to the most serious economic and social problems facing us in Canada. I am referring to the level of unemployment—the 1.5 million Canadians including the 500,000 younger Canadians who do not have jobs today. This Budget is words, words, words. There is no action. There are no policy initiatives.

I want to take this opportunity to set out some of the priorities and objectives which the Progressive Conservative