

*The Address—Mr. La Salle*

impartially as possible, because I believe that in today's context, we should not indulge in the kind of petty politics that has so often proved costly to this country.

First of all, I wish to announce before the House my unconditional support for the economic statement made by my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and for the measures proposed therein. It is the aim of this Government to reduce government spending and to promote economic growth, it being understood that the latter will depend on channelling the energies of all social partners and on their co-operation. I also want to urge Hon. Members opposite to realize the need for unprecedented co-operation and objectivity if we are to truly serve the interests of a country that has placed its trust in us as its elected representatives, whatever our political allegiance.

The measures outlined by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, contain figures and statistics, but I am thinking of the human beings behind the statistics and of all Canadian citizens affected by the deficit problems Canada is facing today. We have been living too long on credit. It is time to wake up out of our pipe dreams and face reality. Mr. Speaker, there are more than a million and a half people out of work in this country. These are people who are able to work, who want to work and who do not have jobs. More than a million and a half that is the entire population of Montreal Island, half the population of Toronto Metro. There are hundreds and thousands of men and women and young people out there who have the right to work, who are entitled to share in the wealth of this vast and beautiful country of ours and for whom today there are no opportunities at all.

It always hurts to share what we have and to pay taxes when we realize how hard we have to work for the money we earn. It is quite human to want to keep our hard-earned money to ourselves. However, it is also a fact that Canadians know how to be generous when they see other people suffer. Need I recall the recent trip to Ethiopia made by our colleague, the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) and the film sequences that showed thousands of elderly people, women and children literally starving to death in the most desperate circumstances you can imagine? All over Canada, thousands of Canadians reacted quickly to help the people of Ethiopia. Of course, the situation is different in Canada. But I want to appeal to that same spirit of generosity and sharing and co-operation, and I hope that at least we Canadians who have jobs will realize we must help our brothers, sisters, parents and friends who live in this country as well and have no jobs and no opportunity to make something of their lives, and whose incomes are below the poverty level.

● (1650)

Mr. Speaker, if we do not change our spending habits, if we do not get rid of the credit card attitude, there may well come a day when we will no longer be able to pay unemployment

insurance to the unemployed, which would be unthinkable. It would be the greatest tragedy that could befall our country if our young people were to inherit a national debt they could never repay, with not a cent left in the Treasury.

The problems facing this country today will require a joint effort and constant co-operation on the part of business, corporations, labour, all levels of government and Members of all three political parties.

During the last twenty years, Mr. Speaker, the number of young people in Canada has increased significantly. This country has invested large sums of money in education at all levels to help our youth enter the labour market with the best and most advanced technical and professional training available to meet the challenges of the 20th and 21st centuries. Today, all we have to offer these young people is a very uncertain future. We must act now, if we want our young people to ever see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. Speaker, it would be irresponsible to consider maintaining the financial commitments made by the previous Government. It would be irresponsible to allow 25 per cent of the total budget to be used to service the national debt. It would be irresponsible to think we should maintain a debt load of \$190 billion, created within the last ten years, as the previous Government has done.

I think the Canadian people have decided who they want to govern them, and because of this, we must make an unprecedented effort to put Canada back on the road to prosperity. This will of course involve a number of sacrifices. And that is exactly what this government intends to do, Mr. Speaker. The responsibility of the private sector is to find employment for young people trained in our educational institutions. The responsibility of the labour force is to do its share to boost productivity. The responsibility of each one of us is to share with others, show initiative and creativity so that together we can find ways to spur the Canadian economy, create jobs and reduce the national debt. But we cannot have one without the other, Mr. Speaker. I am calling upon the spirit of co-operation which has sparked Canadians over the past century, as much in the field of housing as in the field of investment, as much as in the field of forestry as in the field of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Canadians can undertake even more joint endeavours in agriculture, reforestation, housing construction and creation of small and medium-sized businesses. I know that the various levels of government can work closer together to initiate consistent measures and coordinate their efforts without needless duplication.

Should each of us regain confidence in our capabilities and our future and, as individuals, join in the common effort of our society, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the economic and intellectual potential in this country would enable us to have an overwhelming economic revival and a significant reduction in the number of people out of work. Naturally, I repeat that it