

but it is tantamount to being criminal the way this Government approaches and addresses itself to the unemployment problem.

I am hoping that we will hear from other Ministers during the course of this debate because we have heard nothing so far from which we can draw any encouragement. We have not heard anything from the Minister responsible for social policy as to her responsibility in terms of addressing the ongoing nature of the unemployment problem and the social consequences that derive from long-term unemployment. Certainly I am not alone in this House in having direct experience with it. I suppose everyone of us when we go back to our constituencies is directly confronted with the problems of the unemployment situation. If there is a problem in the economy, if the economy has a cold in terms of a recession, then in certain parts of the country it amounts to a case of pneumonia. In my own Province, if the national economy has a cold it gets chronic pneumonia. We have twice the official rate of the national unemployment in my Province of Newfoundland and no prospects, because of continuing Government deficits, to cope with that situation. We have no chance whatsoever to deal with our unemployment in terms of the social need attendant on it in terms of additional welfare benefits. I believe this is a serious problem, Mr. Speaker, and I do not believe the Government is addressing it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Questions?

Mr. Schroder: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to interrupt the Hon. Member when he referred to the absence of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) because I felt I did not want to impinge upon his time. But I think it is only fair for the House to know that the Minister is a witness before the Special Committee on Pension Reform this afternoon. She was 20 minutes late going before the Committee and therefore she could not stay to listen to the Hon. Member's address. I listened to it with care, and I will talk to the Minister about some of the matters that were brought up.

I think we would all agree that pension reform is one of the basic factors in the social welfare and the social well-being of Canadians. I hope the House will not think the Minister is not interested in social reform, social programs or social activities because she was not here. As I said, she went to the Special Committee on Pension Reform as a witness.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, I accept the Hon. Member's intervention. It was not my intention to take a "cheap shot" at the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin). I did think and I do feel that this debate is important enough that the ordinary rules of parliamentary etiquette be followed. Certainly when a Member in his place finishes his speech, he or she should have the courtesy, if I can put it that way, of staying in his or her place to hear whatever rebuttal there is to what was contained in the speech. That is common parliamentary etiquette. I am sorry it was not followed in this case because I believe it is essential that the Minister responsible for social policy in this Government hear

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the concerns expressed in this House with respect to the social consequences of unemployment. I believe, and I say this more in sorrow than in anger, that the Minister of National Health and Welfare is living in a sheltered world having isolated herself from that aspect of her responsibilities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Any further questions or comments?

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Bujold (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be taking part in a debate that is so important in view of the current economic situation. I was very glad to see that on Tuesday, the 19th, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) brought down what is probably the most expansionist budget ever, a budget that in both the short and long term will prove to be the best answer to dealing with the unemployment situation.

Looking at this budget which comes after several months in which we have seen signs of economic recovery and a drop in inflation, we will find incentives for the private sector that will enable many Canadian businesses to continue this recovery and to provide even more productive and long-term jobs across the country. The 2.2 billion, to be injected into the economy over the next four years through special recovery programs, will certainly help to spur and accelerate economic recovery. I agree that this will not remedy all our problems in this country, but we shall certainly see a renewed confidence among all Canadians, and especially among those in the private sector.

When the Minister of Finance brought down this budget, he had to bear in mind the extremely difficult situation of many Canadians who are having to cope with unemployment. That is why the Minister decided to inject \$710 million more into direct job creation programs. I know the Opposition said this is not enough and that we should have injected more funds, but I believe the Minister of Finance preferred to bring down a balanced budget that would respond to present and future needs and would therefore respond to the pressing problem of unemployment.

I was listening earlier to my colleague, the Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) who referred to the letter published by the Catholic bishops. The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) is indeed anxious to consider proposals and recommendations from all levels of society. He has been able to meet with some of the bishops from the Conference and discuss with them ways of improving the employment situation and finding solutions to very pressing problems.

● (1700)

I notice that my colleague referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. We shall certainly have an opportunity, in committee, to consider in detail the