

Government Orders

We had headlines in yesterday's papers, for instance, that seven out of ten Canadians, according to an inside Canada research study, not only said no to this Prime Minister, but seven out of ten Canadians said never again to this Prime Minister. That is the essence of the trustability.

If we look at the federal budget, how do we measure whether Canadians give a passing grade or whether Canadians have a sense of confidence or trust in this government? One measurement is if a unemployed person tuned in at 4.30 p.m. on February 25, that Tuesday afternoon, and got any more trust or hope from that budget in terms of putting him or her back to work. The answer was clearly no, because there was no stimulus aside from allowing RRSP contributions to be utilized in portion toward the purchase of homes. Aside from that measure there was no stimulus, no program, no concerted effort, no sensitivity, no recognition, no admission that 1.5 million fellow Canadian citizens do not have a place to go when the alarm clock wakes them up to start a brand new day. Clearly one measurement is if there was at least naive hope that somehow the Minister of Finance was going to give a sense of optimism to both the unemployed and the general economy. It was not to be, and this was from a government that promised jobs, jobs, jobs, a government that said that the free trade agreement was going to ensure prosperity.

Do we remember the letters during the 1988 campaign from chief executive officers across the country warning their workers that if we do not sign on their places of work would be in jeopardy? Those are the same jobs that are indeed in jeopardy, the same jobs that Canadians have lost.

Where are the transitional programs? Remember when we had a campaign on that. This Prime Minister responded to our leader of the time by saying that we will have the greatest transitional programs that the western world will have ever initiated.

Mr. Harb: Where is it?

• (1710)

Mr. Marchi: My colleague from Ottawa Centre asks: "Where is it?" Canadians are asking themselves: "Where is it?"

They cannot have it both ways. They cannot propel the country into a free trade agreement where more of our sectors are hurting, where more of our people are getting belted, and then at the same time not even help with the realistic measures of transitional programs. It means they do not care about Canadians. It means they are not willing to take some of those moneys, \$30 billion a year, that we pay for unemployed Canadians and for people on welfare. We tell Canadians we are going to pay them an average of \$12,000 to collect unemployment. Then when these persons are finished unemployment benefits, they go to the government again and the government says: "Now we are going to pay you another \$14,000 a year; go collect welfare".

Thirty billion dollars a year, is that a good expenditure to invest in human dignity and in productivity? Are we to accept that this government is always going to hide behind this thing called the debt. No one in this House is irresponsible. We all want to pay our way. We all carry debts. I mean I carry a debt. It is called a mortgage. The bank owns more of my house than I do. That does not preclude me within reason from making other sorts of expenditures either for need or for lifestyle.

In the same way, while the government has responsibilities to maintain and manage this debt situation, it also has to balance the human need of people who are not working, who are not living in dignity, with at the same time an expenditure of \$30 billion. It would have paid to have used portions of that \$30 billion expenditure to put Canadians back to work. However, as soon as we say this we are tagged as being irresponsible free loaders, money spenders and the like when in fact by putting Canadians back to work we would be giving them back their legitimate dignity. They would be working. They would be productive. They would be paying taxes. They would have a weekly income that supersedes what they were getting from welfare and unemployment. It would allow them to make a few purchases of commodities. Perhaps it would encourage the economy back on its feet again and the cycle would kick back and reduce that \$30 billion a year payment for people to sit at home and watch soap operas. That is one of the measurements of a budget.

A member from the other side asked: "Why not trust this government?" It is two weeks after the federal budget was presented and unemployed Canadians are saying: "I still don't trust you".