

Government Orders

much on the middle class. Corporation tax accounts for 8 per cent on the figures produced a couple of days ago.

It was not too long ago that instead of being 8 per cent and 50 per cent, without the GST which makes it 8 per cent and 62 per cent, it was more along the lines of maybe 20 per cent and 30 per cent. I am going back a few years before this government took power, but certainly in 1984 the ratio was much different. The middle class paid less income tax as individuals and corporations paid a lot more.

• (2110)

The situation is that the government has found itself in a position where it cannot manoeuvre, so what does it do? I tend not to expect good projections, but I did have expectations as to what was going to happen. I was in my riding last night when I heard what the minister's measures were and I really honestly believed that I had missed something. It was not until this morning when I saw some of the national newspapers that I realized unfortunately I had not missed anything.

On the main point that concerns me in my riding—and I have heard practically every second speaker today speak on it—I have seen something happen that I never really thought would happen, even with this government. With the choice and with the difficult areas of high unemployment, a staggering deficit and a staggering national debt, there were choices. But the choices that were made in my opinion and in the opinion essentially of most people on this side of the House was that neither one thing nor another was done. With unemployment being the main problem as I see it right now—it certainly is in my riding and in my province—instead of doing something for those who were unemployed they were hit. There were measures that could have been taken to stimulate the economy, infrastructure being one of them that we have been advocating for the last 12 months.

Essentially I believe what the finance minister did was look at the unemployment problem through the wrong end of the telescope and penalize those who need help the most. As one of the members said here today, it was like a doctor trying to diagnose a disease and when he could not find the problem he killed the patient.

I still believe that this was not meant to happen because it is an incredible policy. Whether it is called staying the course, whether it is called a sick budget—I do not care what it is called—this has to be a record decision by a government to do something good at a time when the economy is in rough shape. I know my phone has not stopped ringing today. I have heard other members say as well that they have been inundated with phone calls.

Another aspect of this which bothers me is one that many of my colleagues spoke on today. It is the idea of cutting off unemployment insurance for those who voluntarily quit their jobs. I will be honest. I will tell the finance minister that I can understand him having difficulties finding money for those people who just decide they want to quit and collect unemployment insurance. I can understand cutting them off unemployment insurance. One could argue for that policy. But for people who quit their jobs or feel they are in an untenable position and have to leave their jobs because of things like sexual harassment and uncomfortable working conditions that border on sexual harassment, I think we need to look at this policy again. I believe it particularly discriminates against women, but there are people of the other sex who could be in a similar situation.

Unfortunately I do not give many points for the measures that were taken. The \$8 billion expenditure reduction from the government was surely only meant for the international markets because most of the money we owe is owed to foreigners, certainly I believe more than 50 per cent. With that \$8 billion, as the minister knows, there is no saving this year. That is for future years, for future governments. If the Liberals form the government we will have to do something about that. I am not impressed with that aspect.

To conclude, it has been to me and many of my colleagues a disappointing mini budget. I am sure the finance minister is disappointed too because I have not seen one media clipping that said a lot of good things or had anything good to say about this particular statement.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Madam Speaker, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to be able to comment on the mini budget presented by the Minister of Finance. I must add that I am flattered that