

Supply

unemployed Canadians, including 428,000 Quebecers? These 45,000 jobs, the cornerstone of the platform of the Liberal Party of Canada, are peanuts.

Does the hon. member not realize that this measure is totally inadequate and provides no structural improvement of the employment situation? Does she not realize that all the measures taken by her government since the morning of October 26 have clearly compromised job creation and this country's economic recovery?

• (1240)

Mr. Speaker, I will give you a few examples which I have found particularly revealing since we took up our duties on the morning of October 26.

First of all, her government, after spending years criticizing the high-interest policies pursued by our defunct Conservatives, has now opted for the same policy. This means that as soon as there is the slightest increase in inflationary trends, of the kind we saw in the first quarter of 1990, the new Governor of the Bank of Canada will administer exactly the same horse medicine as his predecessor, which was vigorously condemned by the present government. What does this mean? It means that as soon as there is the slightest hint of economic growth, interest rates will rise, and this will undermine job creation.

Second, since this government came to power, it has failed to correct the laissez faire approach taken by the budget in recent years. The latest Budget brought down by the Minister of Finance is a failure as far as control of public spending is concerned. So much so, in fact, that financial circles are starting to express concern about the government's lack of control. This means that we can soon expect an increase in the rates of interest charged on government borrowing, a trend that may continue in the foreseeable future.

I repeat, the government is undermining job creation, although for months, if not years, it has been saying that the Liberal Party of Canada is a party that promotes job creation. It is part of the tenets of the red book as well.

Third, Mr. Speaker, as you know, the present government insists on playing a role in manpower training, although this comes under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the other Canadian provinces. When it goes on about job creation being so terribly important, the fact is that by not withdrawing from this area, the Liberal government is undermining our chances of creating durable jobs and quality employment in the years to come.

How can members on the other side of the House say that the government is doing something about creating jobs, when the infrastructure program is merely a drop in the bucket, considering one and a half million Canadians are unemployed, and when the government takes the kind of measures it does in this Budget?

Another point I would like to raise, if I may, Mr. Speaker, is that on the other side of the House they keep saying they are doing something about unemployment and want to intensify the measures that will create jobs. What we find in the last Budget is more like a planned attack against the unemployed, because in the next three years, the government is going to take a little more than \$5.5 billion out of their pockets.

That is how the government wants to create jobs and attack poverty, while refusing to restore the budget for social housing, for instance, as it has been promising for years. If that is the way it wants to improve the well-being of Canadians, as it did by attacking old age security pensions and tax credits for the elderly, well, Mr. Speaker, I am truly astonished that the hon. member is still proud to be part of a government that is as far to the right as its Conservative predecessors if not more so.

Mrs. Catterall: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I regret that I do not have time to respond to all of the statements made, but I will do my best.

Yes, it is true that the infrastructure program is just the first of many more initiatives to come. We acknowledge that this is only the first step, a building block, but one that will create jobs in an industry that is truly the cornerstone of the economy, namely the construction industry. Therefore, it is very important to begin here because projects can start immediately.

• (1245)

These initiatives will create both direct and indirect jobs.

The hon. member spoke of controlling public spending. This government has slashed \$17 billion from its expenditures. I would like to ask my colleague opposite the following question: Which programs would he cut? In which areas would he reduce spending and which Canadians would feel the effects of these cuts?

The hon. member also spoke about training for all Canadians. He knows very well that current programs are, by our own admission, inadequate. We have called for broad program reforms, for example, integrating training programs with social programs. The hon. member knows that we are currently seeking input from the Canadian public on ways to improve programs. We will continue to follow this course of action.

The hon. member mentioned unemployment insurance recipients. While we may have reduced our spending in this area, our goal is to provide improved service to the unemployed who have lower incomes.

Getting back to another point, the hon. member said we failed to control spending. Now, he is criticizing one of our spending control initiatives. Again, I ask him: Where would he have cut? Which Canadians would have been affected?