

The Budget

She said a few minutes ago that she saw the budget as a source of jobs—there is nothing to be seen. There is absolutely nothing there, less than nothing for job creation in this country, on the contrary. The only good thing the Liberal government has done to create jobs was the \$2 billion, which became—because it was a tripartite program—\$6 billion.

That was the only good creative thing where jobs could be created, and it should be said that the jobs were temporary. There was \$200 million left, and they were threatening to cut it. And the hon. member for Central Nova is telling us that jobs will be created out of this budget. On the contrary, there is nothing.

She spoke of the deficit and of the debt which had become huge, a major problem for the country. This is true. I, however, would remind her that, in 1970, when her team was running the country, the deficit was almost nil—\$1 billion and some. It was “improved” again and again. There were of course Mr. Clark’s nine months and the preceding government’s nine years, but today’s \$550 billion debt, on which we pay \$50 billion in interest a year, is the child of her own party, except for the nine years the Conservatives were in government, before the Liberals returned to power.

I conclude by asking my colleague how she is going to justify to her constituents the fact that they have widened the gap to obtain parity in industrial milk and unprocessed milk in Nova Scotia?

[English]

Ms. Skoke: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised a number of issues.

• (1345)

Let me set the record straight. I am not biased and I am certainly not confused. I have read the budget, I have scrutinized it and I am very proud to support the budget.

With respect to jobs and job creation we should not overlook the numerous job creation strategy programs the Liberals have implemented and are continuing with the budget. We have our youth service corps initiative and all our human resources development programs the people in my riding of Central Nova rely on on a very regular basis. They are creating jobs. I am proud to say we are now underway in implementing our youth service initiative program.

With respect to ACOA and its new role in terms of economic development in our area, we are very proud and pleased to have ACOA involved in economic and regional development and we are looking forward to working very closely with that agency.

We have our infrastructure program. Although there has been some reduction in the funding my riding has benefited significantly and created a number of jobs pursuant to this program and we are looking forward to future initiatives.

We also rely on small business in our area, which creates up to 85 per cent of the jobs in the country. The Liberals are being very active in terms of ensuring small businesses get the venture capital they need, ACOA will be taking a roll there, and also the measures they have taken in terms of ensuring banks recognize small business initiatives.

With respect to dairy subsidies, which affect my riding, there is only a 30 per cent reduction. There is equity in the budget. Every sector, every individual, every business, everyone has been affected by the budget. In terms of dairy subsidies for Nova Scotia there is only a 30 per cent reduction. It is time it became more competitive and cut its costs in terms of management and organization. It is not necessary for the 30 per cent reduction to be passed on to consumers. I trust it will not be in Central Nova.

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the budget handed down by the Minister of Finance.

The main basis for my support is this was a unique process. This was terrific way all Canadians could participate in the budget. Volumes and volumes of material and input from Canadians across the country were received and distributed among parliamentarians and among the general public. The information came in a variety of forms and forums. There were letters, organized mailings, budget workshops, radio call-ins and town hall meetings.

People put forward their ideas, their personal views, their fears and their projections for the future. Canadians took part in the prebudget consultation process and had their voices heard. No rebellion was necessary. True democracy worked and the budget is a result of that.

In Burlington we had a terrific prebudget consultation meeting. It was a great example of public participation, discussion and debate. We had incredible input and ideas from people of all ages, backgrounds and various work experiences. We provided information to them beforehand so they could make an informed contribution. They could weigh the options. They could think about the issues, unlike the Reform Party which asked people to simply check off which percentage and which columns they would like to have done.

Through discussion we reached consensus on many issues and we had good debate and the debate continues on some others. My constituents thought long and hard about the issues. They offered their considered input.

They did not want to have tax increases without government showing leadership and taking responsible action. They indicated, and I certainly support them, constituents give us their precious tax dollars and it is our job to make it work. We must bring some accountability to the process.