

*The Budget—Mr. Crosby*

suffer an income level not much more than half the income level in Ontario. And the rate of unemployment in some provinces is twice that of provinces with high levels of employment.

National unity has become a key phrase to support a great rush of government sponsored activities. Expensive brochures and materials are dealt out to schools, exchange visits are arranged, programs are erected and disbanded, new policies are formulated and then abandoned, institutions are established and then collapsed, services are implemented and then terminated—all in the name of national unity.

If there is a real concern, Mr. Speaker, with national unity, and if there is a real belief in the danger of national disintegration, then I believe the government should sponsor and implement a national assault on disparities of income and employment. These differences arise out of the structure and history of the Canadian economy and have led to the regional disparity suffered by Atlantic Canada.

If we cannot have an all-out national assault on regional disparity, then at least we can have a national strategy designed to reduce, if not to eliminate, those disparities in income, employment and opportunity. We cannot simply redistribute existing economic activity. Transfer payments and grants are not enough.

Any national strategy must locate and foster new opportunities, new sources of capital and new entrepreneurs. We must combine our strength in natural resources with capital investment and managerial and technical capability. The new strategy must embrace a new natural resource policy, a research and development program, and public support for enterprise that will create consumer products from our resources.

There is nothing, Mr. Speaker, in the budget that even remotely indicates a move toward a new national strategy designed to eliminate the disparities that exist between the regions of Canada. In fact, we have been told that the transfer payments intended to equalize services or correct deficiencies will be reduced. In the result, Atlantic Canada cannot look to the future with great expectations of a changing economy, and that is my first and foremost criticism of the budget. I will not even mention, Mr. Speaker, the failure adequately to support the revitalized fishing industry, because I know my colleague from South Shore (Mr. Crouse) will speak to that.

I mentioned my grandfather and the fact that he was a member of this House. I should mention that he also held a seat in the other place for several years. I was interested in what he might have said during his term in office, possibly in the hope that he might have uttered something more profound than I am likely to offer. In reviewing the debates of more than 50 years ago, I was struck by the timelessness of the interchange. While I found nothing especially profound or prophetic, I discovered that the matter of national unity was, then as now, the preoccupation of many. What my grandfather said on this matter over 60 years ago is a very simple statement but is still apt today. He said, that the great trouble we have in this country is misunderstanding, that we do not know each other

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well enough, that we do not mix and that we do not get together.

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I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that good faith, common sense and mutual respect can resolve the differences between us once we know and understand the problem. In this as in all other matters government must be fair but it must be firm.

My second area of concern in relation to the budget and economic matters is the plight of the young persons in my constituency and in my province. Mr. Speaker, there is no greater despair in a nation that embraces the work ethic than to enter the employment market for the first time and find no job waiting.

The many universities, technical institutes and other educational facilities in Nova Scotia train and graduate an increasingly larger number of young people qualified in professions, technical occupations and trades. These young Nova Scotians cannot put education and training to use in their home province or elsewhere in Atlantic Canada. It is not uncommon for university graduates to work as waiters and waitresses or as sales clerks.

You will not convince these young people there are no solutions to these problems. They believe, and I believe, that a greater effort can—and must—be made. It is prudent to warn those who do not regard the legitimate demands of our young people that about one-third of the voters at the next general election will be in the 18 to 25 age bracket.

While age and experience have a value that is recognized by all, youth and enthusiasm cannot be discounted as a national asset. It is trite to say that the future of this nation is in the hands of the young people, but how many listen to their demands? I suspect those who do not listen to the young will not survive to govern the people.

What does the standard of living enjoyed by most Canadians embrace? I heard hon. members opposite and other supporters of the government decry and debase the proposal to permit tax relief for mortgage interest payments. They say this is pandering to the rich. They say we are neglecting the poor people and the less fortunate, that their numbers are so great they will rise up and strike us down.

I cannot speak for the great constituencies in central Canada in which home ownership is apparently reserved for the rich and powerful, but I can say this for myself and for my constituency—I believe, and have always believed, that every working Canadian should have the opportunity and the financial capability to acquire, in his or her lifetime, some form of home ownership. I believe that the national government should, to the extent possible, assist Canadians in reaching that goal.

While I am on the subject of young people and young Canadians, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that I was one of those who sat in the House and listened to the remarks of the Minister of State for Small Business (Mr. Abbott) in defence of the budget. What he said, Mr. Speaker, is recorded in