

The Budget—Mr. Clark

does not offer, even to the poorest Canadians, a single cent to counter the effects of this heavier load.

As a result of this budget, between now and 1983 the average Canadian will shell out \$500 more annually to keep his house warm and \$400 more annually to keep his car on the road. We all believe that energy prices must go up and that most Canadians should pay more to use energy. But what will happen to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who just do not have \$900 to spare to heat their homes and drive their cars? We offered them significant assistance through the energy tax credit. This budget does not offer them anything.

Because of this budget, if we base ourselves on the figures given by the minister himself, 1,023,000 Canadians will be out of work next year. We have offered incentives to create jobs in the home building and ship building industries and to promote regional expansion. And now this budget sets aside the ridiculous amount of \$45 million a year to improve manpower training, and an 8.6 per cent increase in benefits paid to Canadians who are jobless and who have to cope with double-digit inflation.

[English]

For Canadians who still have jobs next year, this budget proposes a \$1 billion increase in unemployment insurance taxes, a 33 per cent increase on a tax which charges the working poor the same rate as the working rich. For Canadians who want to own a home or who want to work in the housing industry, this budget offers nothing. When we proposed mortgage tax credits, the Liberals said that was not enough, we had to help renters too. This budget does not help anyone own or rent a home. Its only housing policy is to provide a haven for the rich, to bring back MURBs so that wealthy Canadians can avoid paying taxes. We tried to help ordinary Canadians own a home; this budget helps rich Canadians dodge taxes.

That is not all that this budget does to punish the average Canadian. Because this minister refuses to take restraint seriously, because he is adding, over four years, \$12.7 billion to the cash requirements of last December's budget, he is guaranteeing that interest rates will remain high, that Canadians will continue to pay exorbitant rates for their home mortgages and their consumer loans.

Finally, the minister says that, despite millions of dollars in new federal taxes, he intends to pay less to supporting basic social services in Canada. Let me quote him. He wants "significant savings here", savings he will get either by forcing services to be cut or by forcing the poorer provinces to carry even more of the burden. This is one more trick in his budget. They promise that social services will be cut; they do not say by how much, they do not say where, they do not say which services, but the people of Canada who have grown dependent upon social services from this government know that it is the intention of the Liberal Government of Canada to cause a reduction in the standard and availability of social services across this country. But the government does not have the courage to spell out the details.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: The minister faced two challenges in putting together this budget. The first was economic. Canadians desperately need a strong and purposeful statement of economic direction to break through the malaise which existed through a series of years in which, owing to various circumstances, there has not been an accepted statement of government economic policy. We need a statement of economic direction to restore confidence among our people that there can be jobs for them and their children and that the vicious inflationary cycle can be broken. That was the economic challenge facing the minister and he failed it completely. Indeed, he did not even try to meet it.

The second challenge was a political one. This budget was brought forth at a time when the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) personal determination to ram his constitutional package down the throats of Canadians has created serious tensions in this country, especially in western Canada. The minister had an opportunity to use this budget as a healing document, as a way to bring Canadians together in common economic cause, as a chance to show western Canadians in particular that at least someone in this government understood their frustrations and was sympathetic to their genuine aspirations.

That was the minister's political challenge, and again he failed. Instead of healing wounds he chose to deepen them with energy measures which can only be seen by western Canadians as a singular, deliberate assault on their region.

Mr. Speaker, the ultimate tragedy, the ultimate condemnation of this budget, is not just that the minister failed to meet those economic and political challenges. It is that a man who was elected here, presumably on the basis of principle, a man in the tradition of Father Coady, chose not even to try. There he was with a majority behind him, a majority that will shove through anything he wants. He had a mandate and he had a majority to act for Canada, but all he could produce was another federal revenue grab so the ministers opposite could indulge in the 1980s the spending appetites they whetted in the 1970s.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: Since this is not an economic statement but an energy statement, I want to deal for a moment with energy matters. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who has now left the House, talked about the purpose of his energy program. He said the purpose of the energy program is fairness. Well, fairness is an unassailable principle and we all believe in it. Certainly it is a worthy goal of the economic policy. As my colleague, the hon. member for St. John's West, pointed out yesterday, the journal "Canadian Taxation" indicates that, while Liberal budgets of the 1970s served the comfortable, the Crosbie budget actually honoured the principle of fairness by helping Canadians at the bottom of the income scale. Fairness is also the purpose of the equalization program, which this Liberal government is apparently allowing