

The Budget—Mr. Turner

[English]

This is not a trade deal, it is the sale of Canada Act. I urge Hon. Members on all sides of the House to read the agreement. When I listened to the Prime Minister's speech, I wondered whether he had ever seen the document. Clause after clause, article after article, talks in terms of free market forces. We are in favour of the free market. We believe in competition. We believe in enterprise. We believe in rewarding success. However, I want to remind Hon. Members that this country was not built solely on free market forces. This country deliberately, since confederation, resisted the continental forces drawing us north and south by building a country east and west.

We brought British Columbia into confederation by building a railway. We built an airline, we built a broadcasting system, we built a national highway and we built a pipeline because we wanted to resist pure market forces and remain Canadians. Free market forces never gave us public education. Free market forces never gave us public transport. Free market forces never gave us the best public hospital and medical care system in the world.

We have not been an ideological people, we have been a practical people and we believe in a mixed economy. When private capital and private enterprise has not been able or willing to achieve a legitimate public objective, then we have believed that the Crown and the state has a legitimate part to play in the infrastructure of Canada.

I want to say one final thing about market forces. If we were to rely on market forces completely, it would mean that the Atlantic provinces, parts of Quebec, parts of Ontario and western Canada would be turned into one great national park. If we were to rely completely on market forces, the people of Atlantic Canada, western Canada and northern Canada would be centred in three cities, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. That is the kind of country we would have.

It is only because we have resisted pure market forces that we have built a public infrastructure. This country, under Liberal administrations, has believed in equality of opportunity. It has believed that no matter where one lives, where one is brought up or where one dies, one has the same equal opportunity to a job, to a good education, to training and retraining and to a secure retirement. That is the kind of country we built. We built it not on pure market forces, as symbolized by this agreement, we built it on a spirit of Canadianism which gives us equal opportunity across the country.

● (1600)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We did not hear from the Minister of Finance in his statement—that is all it was, a dry run for an election—about what role Canada was playing in

the world. We did not hear about what position we were going to take on Third World debt or the position we were going to take at the IMF or the World Bank about refinancing that debt. We did not hear about the fact that the U.S. has become the largest debtor nation in the world, no longer in control of its own currency. We did not hear that the largest creditor nation is now Japan. The largest banking nation is now Japan. The three largest banks in the world are now Japanese. The Minister did not tell us how Canada was going to contribute to dealing with that avalanche of Third World debt, trade deficits and public debt.

I have called for a new Bretton Woods Agreement where Canada would exercise some leadership and sit down with the other industrial nations of the world to see how we can achieve real monetary reform, better reconcile our fiscal policies, how we can better reach out to the Third World to share the opportunities for a decent life. We did not have a paragraph or two about that, just the blandest words about what our responsibilities as Canadians ought to be. Nothing about achieving a new world economic order that would give us some assurances in the future that trading barriers will continue to come down. Nothing about world currencies achieving some stability or that Canada had something constructive to offer, as we have always done on the international plane. All the Minister and the Prime Minister are settling for is being a junior partner with the U.S. We have a good international role to exercise and we should be exercising it.

A trade deal is no substitute for an economic strategy. In the four Budgets we have seen from the Government the only strategy has been to raise taxes on low and middle-income Canadians and reduce support for those most in need. All these self-styled architects for a better tomorrow on the government side have done is give Canada a blueprint for a Tory Canada. The Tory vision of the future sees a Canada with an even greater widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, a gap that abandons our disadvantaged regions to the whim of market forces, a Canada that abandons our farmers, fishermen, miners and lumber workers, a Canada that dismantles our youth training and educational programs and, again in yesterday's Estimates, our research and development. It is a Canada where we eliminate our retraining programs for older workers, a Canada that constantly cuts back on research and development funding instead of increasing it, a Canada that sells out its sovereign ability to make its own economic, political and cultural decisions, through a so-called trade deal with another country. It is a vision of this country devoid of hope and bankrupt of ideas. It is not a vision that we share. That is why we reject this latest Budget. That is why we reject the Government's trade deal. That is why Canadians are going to reject the Government as soon as they are given an opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!