

*The Budget*

Looking at this budget and comparing it to past budgets, it is basically more of the same. When one has a worn out used car with a new coat of paint, in spite of that new coat of paint it is still the same worn out used car. This budget, in spite of its smoke and mirrors, is still the same worn out, tired budget presented over and over again by the previous minister in spite of the efforts of the present one to dress it up with a new coat of paint, in the form of the appearance of help for Canadians.

When we look at this budget in terms of the government's own priorities of debt and deficit reduction, this government is a failure because the budget speech confirms that the government has again failed to meet its own deficit target. No matter how much it twists and turns, it cannot escape the reality that since it took office, the public debt has actually doubled to \$420 billion.

*[Translation]*

The Conservatives increased our debt; they did not reduce it. I know how much the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance love to distort the truth about it and blame the previous government for the exponential growth of the debt.

*[English]*

The government has responded to some of the suggestions in my leader's emergency economic recovery plan, but what about the other elements in this plan? Where is the national community works program it proposes that would help municipalities all across this country get on with projects they already have on the shelf to upgrade roads, bridges and pollution control system? This program's costs would be shared with the provinces and municipal governments and would help put tens of thousands of people back to work.

Where are the programs the Leader of the Opposition mentioned in his emergency economic recovery program to help our workers obtain basic skills right now? Where are the programs of adjustment to retain and upgrade our workers and restore our industrial base to help it recover from the negative impact of the free trade deal, the GST, and world economic trends?

These programs certainly are not anywhere in this budget. This points to the basic failure of this budget. It does little or nothing to help the 1.5 million Canadians who are unemployed get back to work. It does little or

nothing to help the 2 million Canadians on welfare get back into the labour force.

After the smoke cleared away, the minister, in his speech last night, admitted that with all the activity the budget speech described, there will still be an unemployment rate this year of over 10 per cent and about the same high level next year.

I do not see how the government, if it is responsible and caring, can live with these numbers. Instead of action, the Prime Minister, when he has the chance to say something constructive, calls the unemployed crackpots when they protest their plight.

This budget should have provided a frontal attack on unemployment. It gave us only the illusion of action and nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

As I said last night, the only test that counts is what this budget does for the 1.5 million unemployed. By the standards of that test this budget is an abject failure. This budget does nothing for the fish plant workers in Newfoundland. It does nothing for the auto workers in Ontario or the oil workers and the farmers of western Canada.

What does this government in its budget have to offer the workers who have been laid off at Hibernia and the 2,000 workers who will be losing their jobs at the General Motors plant in St. Catharines? To the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance these people are nothing more than crackpots to be ignored and swept aside.

When I responded to the budget last year I described it as a "blueprint for de-Confederation". The budget given last night does nothing more to strengthen the fabric of this country when that strengthening is badly needed. It gives the illusion of action but it is only a mammoth shell game. Last year the then Minister of Finance called his budget a plan for economic recovery. But instead of recovery, it brought further recession and fear about the future. There is little in this budget to take away that fear and concern from the minds of millions of Canadians.

*[Translation]*

These people deserve better than that. They worked very hard all their life, but every additional year under this government sets them back a little further. Did they do all that for nothing? Today, they cannot even afford what the middle class took for granted not so long ago. Those who always took care of their future are worried