

Supply

people back to work in some sort of program and to help with training and retraining them.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. It was a positive speech. It was well focused. It hit exactly on the problems and some of the solutions that have to take place. In all fairness I think he would admit, if he had stopped to think about it, that the budget of the Minister of Finance that came down in February emphasized helping businesses streamline and modernize.

He talked about new equipment and streamlining. One of the interesting or encouraging things about the increase in imports into Canada that we have seen—and we have seen an increase in exports as well and we still have a trade surplus there—is that the increase has been in new and modern equipment coming into Canada to streamline. We are seeing it everywhere.

I will be talking in my remarks this afternoon about the riding of my friend. One of the companies I had the pleasure of touring with him in his riding, in Stratford, was the FAG Bearing Company. It is not only bringing in modern equipment. It is designing it and building it for its own use. It is very exciting and it is happening here in Canada.

I agree with him. We increased the capital cost allowance in the budget to allow companies to write off that equipment quicker. We cut their taxes to encourage them to establish now, to create jobs and to streamline.

In all fairness, the government is doing that and I think that is fine.

I heard the member say that we should get people jobs first and then train them. That is a problem, because the jobs that are available need specially trained persons to fill them. It is kind of what comes first, the chicken or the egg? I listened to him and I heard what he was saying. I do not disagree. I would much rather have people working now, but the jobs that are available require the special training and therefore we have to concentrate on training.

I am, very pleased the hon. member would commend the Minister of Employment and Immigration for adjust-

ing and coming up with another \$150 million for training because of the high unemployment in the country today and the need for that retraining.

Mr. Speller: Mr. Speaker, I agree with a number of the directions in which the minister went in that budget. Unfortunately what I do not agree with in what he did was where he was getting the money.

I understand his problems with the debt and I understand the importance of bringing the debt down, but unfortunately he took money from one important area and put into another important area without really reinvesting new moneys in these areas. I believe very strongly that we need to invest new moneys. We could get these new moneys by investing in Canadians, putting them back to work and thereby, once they are back to work, collecting taxes.

I would start that by following the suggestion of our leader for an infrastructure program. We need to invest the billions of dollars it will take, quite frankly, because we will get a double investment back from the provinces. Who is going to win? It will not be the provinces. The federal government will win on this because we are the ones who are going to get back all the taxes. It would not take a lot of money out of our operating budgets now to do that.

Another area on which I disagree with the government is the whole sense of co-operation between Ottawa and especially my province of Ontario. I see this government going in one direction and saying that we have to cut the debt and we want to put emphasis on this area and the provincial government going in a completely different direction. It does not work for Canadians.

We have to put our political differences aside and co-operate both federally and provincially in sending a strong signal to Canadians that we will help them in these areas and in training.

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to add my words in my support of the motion presently before this House.

I have been asked by my colleagues to represent the interests of northern Ontario in this debate. I thank them very much for giving me the opportunity to do so.