

*Supply*

last 75 days, for the sole purpose of hearing what the people had to say about the Government and what was happening to them. I visited Cape Breton as well as the mainland of Nova Scotia. There are many concerns, some of which resulted from the May 23 Budget. For example, the workers at the heavy water plants were laid off and only heard that fact as they listened to the budget speech on television. They were certainly affected by the actions of the Government. Two weeks prior to the presentation of the Budget, they were told by a Minister of the Crown that before anything happened to the heavy water plants they would be consulted. Also they were told that other job programs would be in place before anything happened to them.

Let us look at what happened. That is not what the Government in fact did. The more than 600 people working in those two heavy water plants turned on their television sets on budget night and heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), with that one line in his Budget, tell them that their jobs had disappeared. It was a shameful action. It was a cruel and harsh measure. Even if the Government believed that it had to take that step, it could have been more concerned about how it dealt with the people affected. They should not have been required to turn on their television sets that night to hear from the Minister of Finance, without any explanation or expression of concern, that their jobs and, in many cases, their homes in those communities had disappeared. That harshness or cruelty is typified in many of the decisions made by the Government.

**Mr. Boudria:** Shame.

**Mr. Murphy:** It is not only the present Government. As I said in my introductory remarks, it has not been only the Conservative Government. The Liberals cannot pretend, despite the mutterings of the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Pre-scott-Russell (Mr. Boudria), that these problems are new ones.

I should like to return to some of the concerns which I heard expressed in Atlantic Canada. I wrote to various Ministers about these concerns. For example, I wrote to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) about Sydney Steel Corporation and CN orders going to European manufacturers. That was not something new. The problems with Sydney Steel have existed for years. When the Liberals were in Government, we asked questions about Sydney Steel. We asked where was the money for phase two and when real action would take place on their commitment to those people. We are still awaiting that action. We were promised by the previous Liberal Government—and now the Conservative Government is promising it—that there would be money for phase two, yet the people of Sydney are still waiting. They were told that the decision would be made soon. They were told that in September and in October. They were told that a decision would be made before the end of October, and later they were told that it would be by the end of November. However, that decision has not come about. The previous Liberal administration and the present Conservative administration have talked a lot about Sydney Steel but have refused to act.

I have also written to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) about the workers in the heavy water plants in Cape Breton who were laid off. Many of the problems faced by those people were not only as a result of new Conservative measures respecting unemployment insurance. They also exist because there were cut-backs in the unemployment insurance program by the previous Liberal Government, and the Conservative Government continued along the same path.

I have written to many Ministers. For example, I wrote to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and to the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. MacKay). I wrote to the Minister of Transport about CN Marine and staff reductions in North Sydney. I have written to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) and to the Minister of Finance. I have written many letters, such as the one to the Minister of National Revenue about the heavy water plant workers. I have been trying to point out that these people are facing serious problems. They are not new problems. No one can pretend that they came about on September 4, 1984 with the election of the Conservative Government. These are problems on which the Conservatives are now making very harsh decisions, very harsh on the people who live in those communities and work in those operations. They are a continuation of the years of neglect, the years of failing to come to grips with regional economic expansion. We must remember that the Liberals were in power for most of that period of time.

One of the most harsh decisions in so far as Atlantic Canada was concerned was when the previous Liberal decided to dismantle the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. That Department was incorporated within the new Department, at which time I rose, as well as others, and explained that in the long run less money would be going into the hinterland areas such as Atlantic Canada and more money would be going into large industries in the heartland. This means that as the country continues to grow, the hinterland areas will continue to be ignored. That is what has happened.

I attended as an observer at the First Ministers' Conference, and Conservative Premiers from Atlantic Canada said that we were suffering because the money for regional development was not keeping pace with other government expenditures. That was said by Conservative Premiers. They told that to the Conservative Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and other Ministers such as the Minister of Employment and Immigration. They said that the money was not forthcoming in the same proportion as it used to be. This results from the fact that there is no Department of Regional Economic Expansion with a specific mandate to ensure that the interests and concerns of the people living in those regions are looked after.

Again this is not strictly as a result of the neglect shown by the Conservatives. It is also a result of a decision made by the Liberal Government and a trend started by that Government to reduce the total amount of government expenditures directed toward regional economic expansion.

Before I sit down, and I made a promise to a Liberal Member that I would give him an opportunity to speak before