

Government Orders

woman. Since the days of Laurier, King, St. Laurent, Trudeau, Turner and now Chrétien, our commitment has always been to those humble people of our society, the farmers, the labourers and all others who work day in and day out to provide a better life for their families.

This budget continues that firm commitment, clearly establishing a framework for economic renewal and investing in the skills of Canadians. We support job creation with the national infrastructure program, youth internship and apprenticeship programs.

Unlike the previous Conservative government the new Liberal government has pledged that we will never misuse unemployment, high interest rates and human misery as false weapons against inflation.

We have pledged that employment is the first priority of our economic policy. A rollback of the unemployment insurance premium rate to the 1993 level of \$3 for 1995 and 1996 saves businesses over \$300 million a year which can be reinvested in new jobs. A Canada investment fund to provide venture capital for innovative companies and a Canadian technology network to help small business to get access to new technology are just two examples.

Small business is the backbone of the economy and that is where we have placed our emphasis. These are not simplistic pledges; they are the heart of our tradition. They have been the soul of our party across generations. It is the glory and the greatness of our Liberal tradition to speak for those who have no voice, to remember those who are forgotten, to respond to the frustrations and fulfil the aspirations of all Canadians seeking a better life in a better land.

Programs may sometimes become obsolete but the idea of fairness always endures. Circumstances may change but the work of compassion must continue. It is correct we cannot solve problems by throwing money at them, but it is also correct that we dare not throw our national problems on to the scrap heap of inattention and indifference.

The poor may be out of political fashion but they are not without human needs. The middle class may be angry but they have not lost the dream that all Canadians can advance together. Canadians are tired of changes that merely nibble at the edges. We will implement bold, sweeping reforms that will ensure Canadians can adapt to the challenges of the new economy. We need to build bridges to work, to independence, not dependence. We must better deliver to those in need and at the same time make sure the social safety net remains affordable.

We will overhaul these programs to help Canadians move into the workforce. The demand of our people in 1994 is definitely not for bigger government but for better government. Some say government is always bad and that spending for basic social programs is the root of our economic evil, but the present recession and unemployment rates cost our economy billions of

dollars every year. Unemployment and recession are the biggest spenders of all.

We are the party that brought the Canada pension plan and medicare to the nation. We have always been the party of hope. With the budget of my friend and colleague, the Minister of Finance, we are offering new hope to a Canada uncertain about the present but unsurpassed in its potential for the future.

To all those overburdened by an unfair tax structure let us provide new hope for real tax reform. Instead of shutting down hospital wings let us shut off tax shelters. The budget closes loopholes and brings greater fairness to the tax system.

During the recent election campaign I listened and learned from the people of my riding of Kent, the heart of southwestern Ontario.

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I listened to a factory worker in Chatham, Ontario who had six children to support and was going to her factory shift. I listened to a Motor Wheel employee with four kids and many bills who lost his job after 25 years at the plant. It is now an empty shell of a building, shut down, throwing hundreds on the unemployment lines. I listened to a farm family in Howard township who wonder whether they can pass the good life and the good earth on to their children. I listened to a grandmother in a seniors home in Dresden who has only the old age pension to make ends meet and wants her remaining years to be dignified and decent. I listened to a 23-year old out of work, to students without the tuition for university or college and to families without the chance to own a home.

In my riding especially I have seen the closed factories and the stalled assembly lines of Chatham and Kent county. I have seen far too many idle men and women desperate for work. I have seen far too many working families desperate to put food on the table, to make the hydro, mortgage and car payments with one parent either working or laid off while being taxed to the hilt.

As I arrived at 4.30 every morning at the plant gates during the election, I also sensed a yearning for new hope among the people at every factory and every corner store. I felt it in their handshakes. I saw it in their faces. I shall never forget the mothers who had to work on the 5 a.m. shift to earn enough money to feed their children.

I shall always remember the veterans in the Royal Canadian Legions and the seniors in nursing homes who have lived in a Canada of high purpose and who believe it can all happen again. They are all optimistic. If only they had a government that was on their side, a government that spoke out for the little guy.

I believe we are that government. Today in their name, for the people of Kent, I am here to speak for them. It is an honour and a privilege to be a member of Parliament, but our highest duty, our overriding passion is to stand with our constituents to express the thoughts and concerns of those who do not have paid