

The Budget

responsibility not only to members of the government and members of the House, but to every person in the country.

As the Prime Minister stated, the key—

The Deputy Speaker: I have given the minister extra time already. I am sorry, her time has expired, unless there is unanimous consent that she be given more time.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to my colleague's speech. The problems she described in her region sound pretty similar to those in mine, except that the solutions she offers are almost unacceptable, and I will tell you why.

If I understood correctly, she is telling the poor, people with major problems, the unemployed, people on UI and income security that they must show more imagination and initiative.

I also heard the other day one of her colleagues on the other side of this House say that a former member of Parliament who has been without a job for eight years is having a very hard time finding work even though he is well-known. Yet, he is not lacking in either imagination or initiative.

Whenever the poor—whether it is a single person, a couple or a family with a father, mother and four children—are unemployed, they are asked to show initiative and imagination. Yet, when a person whose salary was much higher has trouble finding another job, we commiserate.

The budget may also hit seniors next year. In my region, farmers face cuts of 15 per cent this year and 15 per cent next year for a total of 30 per cent, which represents about \$2,500 a year for the average farmer. This leads me to ask my colleague if we are looking for revenue in the right places or if we simply get the money from the pockets of the most disadvantaged and the poorest.

My colleague did not say that these people were lazy, but she said that they should show more imagination and initiative. Seventy-five per cent of the time, they are full of imagination and initiative, but they are still without jobs. I would like her to explain this to me.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Ms. Blondin—Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague that anything I said certainly was not prejudicial to the people who are poor or people in different wage categories. We understand we have equality of opportunity. Everyone has the opportunity to participate. Everyone has the opportunity of freedom of speech, to be mobile, to move, to look for the

opportunities. Sometimes it is more difficult. I agree that can be a problem.

When I talked about innovation I was not just talking about the consumers of government programs or people looking for jobs. I was talking about all sectors of society. It is a process where government will participate but sometimes people or organizations can do it better so we will defer to them because it will be more cost efficient and more effective.

As for opportunities for people, we cannot step back and be ashamed of the fact that we have managed to create 400,000 jobs. One hundred thousand of those were directly related to government initiatives. Many of those jobs were in Quebec. We are not ashamed of that. We are quite happy to recognize that and affirm that we have a commitment to continue helping people.

It is not just government's responsibility. People want us to change the way in which government works so that they will have the opportunity to be active participants rather than to have a passive role. They are dying for the opportunities. We want to make those available to them.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the remarks of the Secretary of State for Training and Youth she commented quite extensively about programs for aboriginal people and the ability of aboriginal people to participate in our economy as a result of budgetary measures.

She mentioned a number of programs but I notice she did not mention the aboriginal economic development program, something that is absolutely essential to provide assistance to aboriginal people who have difficulty in achieving financial commitments from existing financial institutions to develop the economic means by which to create self-sufficiency within their own communities.

The aboriginal economic development program, just when it is needed most, has received a more than unfair reduction in commitment from the federal government, a reduction of approximately 30 per cent as I understand it.

I wonder if the secretary of state could comment on the need for the aboriginal business development program and what her thoughts are about this unfair cut or reduction in federal commitment to that program.

Ms. Blondin—Andrew: Mr. Speaker, I was not speaking just to aboriginal issues. I was speaking to those within the department that I work in. I was not speaking to the ones in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs or Industry. I am not ashamed to speak to those issues. I am not afraid and I am not reluctant. I just did not mention it.

There was a 25 per cent cut. Part of the effort in the program review and looking at the way we deliver services to people is to make these programs more efficient, more effective, more directly related to delivering services to the individuals, to the