twins, tweedledum and tweedledee. We remember how the doom and gloom boys stood in the House after the first Budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and said that the Budget will cost the country 100,000 jobs, with 100,000 more people in poverty. However, they admit today that his Budgets have resulted in 675,000 more people working in Canada and fewer families living in poverty.

Now what do they do? They talk about equality and the fact that we should be concerned about growing inequality in the regions. The easiest thing in life to share equally, without argument, is nothing. Ten people or 100 people can have an equal share of nothing.

We all admit that there is some sense of growing inequality in the regions. I come from the west where people feel some sense of increasing inequality. However, I point out that every region is growing. That is the difference between what we inherited in 1984, when every region of the country was in decline. Two and one-half years later, jobs are growing and the economy is growing in every region.

Federal Budgets are designed to be tools to produce growth, create jobs, reduce poverty and provide a better standard of living for Canadians. I believe we would have difficulty in not recognizing that the Minister of Finance is an absolute genius with budgets. In 1979, I sat in this Chamber to hear the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) present his Budget. The country was in difficulty at that time; people were living in poverty and unemployment was growing. We presented a Budget to straighten out that situation and jobs began to be created in anticipation of that Budget. The Canadian Council of Welfare said that the Budget was the fairest in the decade of the 1970s. The Budget was designed to deliver money to the poor people who needed it, it would reduce their costs, increase shelter and create jobs at better than 30,000 a month.

The Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, tweedledum and tweedledee, threw the Budget out during that crisis in our country. They stood in this Chamber to say they could not approve this Budget. They threw the Budget out because they were playing politics with the lives of Canadians. As a result, for four long years Canada was in great trouble. Canadians should not forget the 22 per cent and 23 per cent interest charges on their mortgages. Canadians should not forget that farmers were going bankrupt by the boatload and small businesses were going belly-up.

In my Province of Alberta in 1979 there were employment opportunities for young people from across the country. They came from Newfoundland, British Columbia and Yukon to get good solid jobs and a start in life in our province. However, through the budgetary policies of those Parties who are now in opposition, who get together to destroy the nation whenever there was a crisis, took that 4 per cent unemployment rate and increased it to 12 per cent. That unemployment increase was not a result of falling international prices but deliberate public policy. Those of us who were in the House during that period should never forget that. When one lives in a community where crime increased, family violence increased and suicides increased as a result of deliberate public policy, one should never forget it.

• (1400)

One should never trust the architects of that kind of public policy to be in charge of the financial affairs of this country ever again. I do not claim that the New Democratic Party was deliberate in supporting that kind of policy. I think the Liberal policies were deliberate. However, one cannot go on being a child bride all one's life. Sooner or later the NDP has to grow up and make its policy choices public. It cannot be on every side of the fence. It must recognize the consequences of what it supports.

Mr. Keeper: Is that the voice of experience?

Mr. Hawkes: That is the voice of years of experience in this Chamber. I have seen Budgets which do what Budgets are supposed to do, keep stability and confidence in the country, keep inflation and interest rates down and keep employment up. I have seen two Budgets which worked and two days ago I think I saw the third. In each and every case these Budgets came from the current Minister of Finance. The current Minister of Finance is the only one in my eight years as an Hon. Member who has had a chance to demonstrate what a good Budget can do. But we will not hear the Opposition stand up and say, maybe we will support this one, at least in part, because it is the first time in 30 years that a deficit has gone down for three years in a row and interest rates are the lowest they have been in a decade.

I heard the Leader of the New Democratic Party stand in this Chamber and bleed for the Province of Alberta. What a laugh. But I did not hear his voice in this Chamber bleeding for the Province of Alberta and the people who live there as our unemployment went from 4 per cent to 12 per cent. I did not hear one scintilla of evidence in what he said in this Chamber that he comprehends the province, the people in it or the current situation. There are 23,000 more people working full time in the Province of Alberta today than there were in September of 1984. We are hurting. We have a lot of unemployed people, we would like a lot more jobs, and we are working hard to provide them. However, by every economic criterion, in the face of low world oil prices and low world agricultural prices, the economic situation in Alberta today is better than it was when this Government was elected in September 1984. The failure of the Leader of the NDP to mention that, to even allude to it, and I suggest to the House, to be knowledgeable about it, tells us perhaps more clearly than anything else that he is playing politics. He does not care. He does not know. He is simply playing politics. Someone gives him a press clipping, someone deep in the bowels of his research organization gives him a line to read, so he reads it, but does he understand Alberta? Does he care? Is he the captive of the labour leaders of the big powerful unions? Or are they the captive of the Leader of the New Democratic Party?