

*The Budget—Mrs. Grace MacInnis*

[English]

The people put this government in power because they were in trouble and needed desperately to believe in Santa Claus. This is a streamlined version in modern dress of Santa Claus with Superman under the hood. The problems which exist for the people across this country, problems of unemployment, training, rising prices, housing, social security and so on, all boil down to one burning problem: how to get enough income to live on in the world of 1968. Please do not think that the majority of the Canadian people are waiting for government handouts to achieve the desired end. One speaker said exactly what I believe. I believe the majority of the Canadian people want productive work. They do not want handouts. A great many of the people who are receiving handouts now would never have been put in that position if governments in the past had been able to provide them with productive work. These people should be taken off handouts at the earliest possible moment and given productive work.

I am not talking about the few extremely poor people who are located in unfortunate pockets of poverty across Canada. No; I am talking in the language of the Economic Council of Canada which, in its review of September, 1968, said:

The statement that at least one Canadian in every five suffers from poverty does not appear to be a wild exaggeration. It is almost certainly close enough to the truth to be taken as one of the most serious challenges facing economic and social policy over the next few years.

Four million people, Mr. Speaker, is a lot of Canadians—four million people suffering from poverty. These are not just those whom we consider as the destitute and no-good. This budget, in my opinion, is a continuation of the policy which this government began from its inception. It is the same policy that cancelled the winter works program; there is a production stoppage right there. It is the policy by which we will not have any increase in family allowances, the policy that there will be no increase in the basic old age security pension, the policy that there will be no legislation this year to increase the allowances of veterans and their dependants, the policy that keeps the poor hardpressed superannuates of the public service hanging on desperately in the hope that those of them who built up their pensions in the years when a dollar was worth a dollar will now be able to get enough to live on in these days of inflation. It is the same policy all along the line.

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

It is true that there is a segment of the Canadian people living in affluence. These people might like the budget but their satisfaction will be very restricted because their time for enjoyment cannot be long with this sort of thing. I believe it was Abraham Lincoln who said that a nation cannot long survive if half its people are slaves and half are free. Neither can a nation live long if half its people live in affluence and half in poverty.

I feel that this budget fails the majority of Canadians on two counts. First, it places the new tax burdens unfairly on the shoulders of moderate and low income citizens and allows the wealthy to get away with a relatively much lighter load. I need not go into the ways in which this has been done. We have heard these outlined since this debate began. Second, it outlines no new policies for stepping up production and the jobs and wages that go with production nor does it propose any way of providing more income for pensioners and others who have no means of earning for themselves.

What do I think should have been in the budget? I think one is bound to give one's own ideas if one is to criticize this budget. In the time that one has one can give only a very brief outline and cannot make an in-depth study. First, I believe there should have been definite plans for economic growth and development. It is all very well, as some members have done this afternoon, to get up and talk about how marvelous Canada's productive capacity is and how great our attainments in production and so on are. I would go back to the figures quoted by my colleague from Waterloo the other day when he pointed out that of the 14 western nations in O.E.C.D., Canada's production output per man is the lowest of all. I do not think that is a record of which we should be proud. Furthermore, it frightens me, because if we cannot get better production than this we will not be able to keep these social security programs whether they are under federal, provincial or any other auspices.

I am not one of those people who think that all the social welfare schemes are satisfactory. But I believe that at the present time the taxpayers are squeezed dry because there are not enough taxpayers with enough income to pay properly and the little fellows are being squeezed out of proportion to those on higher incomes. I believe what we need badly are productive jobs.

You may ask, how are we going to do this? My memory goes back to world war II. I