

the last decade, which is to go out and borrow more money so that my children and your children, Mr. Speaker, can pay more interest tomorrow.

An hon. Member: Right on.

An hon. Member: No wonder you are in the opposition.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, one hon. member opposite says: "No wonder you are an Albertan".

An hon. Member: No, I said "in the opposition".

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: That's a big difference.

Mr. Hawkes: It is the difference between being responsible and not being responsible, I suggest. I thought the hon. member said that it was no wonder I was an Albertan. Perhaps hon. members on that side of the House might care to listen to some of us on this side of the House who represent different regions of this country. One of the characteristics I think they will find of the people who live in western Canada, whether we are talking about Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia, is a value they have had for a long, long time in relation to this issue of deficits. In their own personal lives they have a great reluctance to become over-committed to debt. There is a tendency on their part to ask their politicians, whatever their political suasion, to balance the budget. They do not want the government to create debt for them tomorrow. They want the government to do the things that need doing today and to pay for those things today. They have lived through the dusty times. They have had their homes taken over on default during the depression.

This is the kind of tradition that exists in our regions. There is no sureness that next season there will be enough rain and enough sunshine to produce a good crop. When they have a good crop they put a little away for a rainy day. They spend what they have to but they do not go out and commit themselves to something that they may not be able to meet tomorrow because the sun does not shine and the rain does not fall.

When we look at the western regions of this country we find that this was the philosophy during the depression and during the war. Throughout our political history that has been the dominant philosophy. Now, in 1980, that is the healthy economic region of this country. The taxes which are raised there can be spent in productive ways.

When I look at the federal budget I see that 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the taxes which this government is taking from the Canadian people is spent in non-productive ways, such as paying interest on the public debt and oil compensation payments to Mexico, Iran and Venezuela. Some 25 per cent of the money raised from Canadian taxpayers is not being spent in any useful way. Those expenditures are not related to the unemployment problems in this country, yet they create a burden on all citizens of this country, a burden almost in perpetuity. I think this borders on the criminal.

Employment Tax Credit Act

At the very least we have had a decade of irresponsibility, and today we have major problems. We have a million unemployed with 25 per cent of taxes raised being spent clearly in non-productive ways. We have the finance minister's admission that the increase in the deficit, which increases borrowing, is a consequence of non-productive spending. A look at the main estimates shows that what has happened in the last two or three years is that we have had a real decline in productive spending, more than matched by the increase in non-productive spending. We have more than a million unemployed people in this country as a consequence of a decade of those kinds of policies.

• (1550)

We on this side of the House urge hon. members on that side of the House, those with some sense of reason, to rethink some of the things that have occurred and to argue more strenuously for a little more responsibility so that some of these problems can be solved over time.

The bill which has been presented, Bill C-19, commonly called the employment tax credit bill, on the surface looks innocuous, and it is before us for debate today. I took the trouble to read a speech delivered in this House on December 13, 1979 by the former minister of employment and immigration. The former minister agrees in part with the current minister, that there is something to be said for a program which encourages the creation of employment in the private sector. That is the kind of bill which is before us today. It is better to create employment in the private sector than in the public sector. The long-term consequences are more positive and the costs are somewhat lower. However, did the previous minister intend to introduce the piece of legislation which is before us today? The answer to that question is, no. On December 13 the former minister promised to introduce an employment tax credit bill, but it was significantly different from the bill which is before us today.

The analogy which I have in my mind is that the bill before us today is a "shot gun" bill as opposed to a "rifle" bill. If one really studies and examines the unemployment statistics of this country, it is clear that unemployment is very high in certain regions and very low in others. It is clear that young people, women, the handicapped and native people suffer higher rates of unemployment than do other groups. In these groups unemployment is in some cases three, four or five times higher than the rate of unemployment in the more experienced, normal work force.

The next thing that we should consider in terms of this bill is, does it deal in any specific way with those target groups? When I started my address this afternoon, I talked about the haves and the have-nots. I said that there are over one million have-nots who have no place and no job. But in that category of women, young people, natives and the handicapped, there are more have-nots than in the other groups.

This is "shot-gun" bill that provides no incentive to target the creation of employment on those groups. I suggest to the hon. members of this House that if we have a public responsi-