

Government Orders

go right back to the drawing-board and start rebuilding the morale of the country, especially on the shop floor?

Mrs. Marleau: Madam Speaker, I agree, absolutely and completely. It is not only on the shop floor, but everywhere across the country.

While I was home during the last ten days on the Easter break, I had a number of phone calls. One person, in particular, said to me: "What can we do to bring back the feeling of wellness that we used to have in being Canadians and in our businesses?" This particular person expressed a fear that things appeared bad and people felt bad, so things got worse and that, if somehow the government could instil confidence in the Canadian people, then there would be a change in the trend.

When people feel better about themselves, they do better things. You invest a little money and you get a lot more in return. I am talking about this with the mining aspect of the budget in mind. If there are no grants—I know the government does not like to have grants of any kind if it can help it—then have an enticement for the public to use their money to invest in all kinds of businesses which will make our economy strong and bring back the kind of hope and joy to our economy and our people across Canada in all regions of the country.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, I am distressed at the rhetoric that we hear from the other side.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blenkarn: We have a problem of a great national debt and we have a problem that the federal government for a long period of time has been financing what are provincial responsibilities. Post-secondary education is a provincial responsibility. Social assistance is a provincial responsibility. Health care is a provincial responsibility. Medicare is a provincial responsibility.

So, here we are with a federal government running a massive deficit and criticism all over the place by those on the other side. When something is done to redress that imbalance by asking those provinces running in surplus to pay for the programs that they ought to pay for anyway, we hear crying, weeping, and wailing. Now what kind of nonsense is that?

Mr. Mills: We were constructive. We are listening to the people.

Mr. Blenkarn: My friend says he is constructive. This week the province of British Columbia produced a balanced budget, indeed a budget forecasting a surplus. The province of British Columbia is well able to look after those in that province in distress who need social assistance, day care, and all of the things that our people in urban societies require. That province is running a surplus and we hear cries that the Canada Assistance Plan for the province of British Columbia is being cut to a growth rate of only 5 per cent, approximately the inflationary rate. Surely to goodness, the province of British Columbia, in its financial position, can look after its own.

The same can be said for the province of Ontario which last year ran a surplus. Tomorrow, Mr. Nixon comes forth with his budget. I will bet it is a surplus budget. I will bet, notwithstanding the changes proposed in this bill, that the provincial economies, the provincial tax measures, and the burgeoning growth of revenues from those provinces, are more than sufficient to handle the problems of those provinces.

Mr. Gardiner: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I could not let the hon. member get by without correcting him on one point. He makes reference to the province of British Columbia and its recent budget—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member should know that this is a point that he may want to raise in debate at a later time, but this is not a point of order. The hon. member for Mississauga South.

• (1730)

Mr. Blenkarn: Never mind, Madam Speaker, he never makes sense anyway.

We have a situation where provinces are strong, where provinces have ample revenue. Indeed, we have a situation where the treasurer of the province of Alberta boasts that he is so rich that he does not even need to have a provincial sales tax. We have these people crying on behalf of the wealthy. With the condition of the economy of this country, surely it is an obligation of all of us to say to those governments that can raise the money: