

The Budget

But that will not be the end of it since this budget has resolved nothing. We will always face a monstrous debt if we do not take steps of some sort toward renewal, true structural renewal, to create a new country and breathe new life into Quebec. If this is not done, we will pay for it and go on paying.

In Quebec we have the chance to start afresh, to create our own social plan, to make an honest general effort not to be at the mercy of this government's arbitrary measures year after year which result in higher taxes any way you look at it. We can decide to extricate ourselves from this system or to keep sinking with the big federal machine.

I think that Quebecers will choose to change governments, they will opt for renewal instead of the doldrums year in, year out, with no real social plan, without hope for job creation, without hope for enrichment, other than the enrichment of the federal debt.

I would like to suggest the following amendment to the Minister of Finance's budget speech; I move:

That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"the House of Commons reject the government's budget which systematically offloads the federal government's financial problems onto the provinces; makes no provision whatsoever to ease the tax burden of the middle class while preserving tax loopholes for wealthy Canadians and large corporations; and completely disregards the pressing needs of the unemployed and the most disadvantaged who will bear the full brunt of additional cuts to social programs". brev

• (1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the budgetary policy of the government as contained in the budget presented to the House yesterday. In doing so I wish to approach the budget not so much from the perspective of an opposition party, but more from the perspective of the people whose personal and collective interests are affected by the budget.

On behalf of Canadians, Reformers will be subjecting the budget to four major tests. The first is the employment test. Does the budget address the needs of the unemployed or underemployed in the country? The second is the social security test. Does the budget address the needs of the recipients of government services, in particular, social services? The third is the fiscal test. Does the budget meet the fiscal expectations of those putting up the money, the lenders that are being asked to put up over \$30 billion to cover the government's overdraft and the long-suffering taxpayers who are asked to put up almost \$120 billion a year? Finally there is a character test. Does the budget demonstrate the qualities of honesty, courage, fairness, leadership and integrity which Canadians have a right to expect from their government?

My colleagues will be applying these tests to the budget in greater detail than I, but let me give a summary of the results.

The finance minister says the budget meets the partisan goals of the Liberal red book and its timid fiscal target of getting the deficit down toward \$25 billion by the year 1997. While a few observers and commentators may be gullible enough to accept the red book and the 3 per cent goal as acceptable measuring sticks, at the end of the day the vast majority of Canadians will not.

If this budget is measured against the interests of the unemployed and underemployed Canadians who want real jobs, it betrays those interests because it contains no real long term stimulus to private sector job creation.

If this budget is measured against the interests of the recipients of government services who desire real social security, it betrays those interests because it does nothing to halt the diversion of funds away from social programs into massive interest payments on a growing federal debt.

If this budget is measured against the interests of Canadians who want a solid plan for deficit elimination, it betrays those interests because it only plans to get the deficit to \$24 billion by the year 1997.

If this budget is measured against the interests of the long-suffering taxpayer who wants no tax increases and spending reductions which lead to tax relief, it betrays those interests because it takes over \$1 billion more per year out of the pockets of taxpayers and lays the foundations for future tax increases.

In short, when this budget is measured against the public's interests; the interests of workers, the interests of those who depend on social services, the interests of investors, lenders and taxpayers, it betrays those interests at every turn. It is a betrayal of trust of the same order as the Mulroney and Wilson budgets of 1984-85 which missed the narrow window of opportunity to balance the budget, which comes only once to a new government, never to return again.

In delivering this sad commentary, I do not wish to be unfair to the Minister of Finance, nor overly disparage his efforts to bring in a better and more honest budget. If the Minister of Finance and his department had been given more freedom and support by the Prime Minister, they might have come clean with Canadians on what deficit spending is doing to destroy social programs. They would have made the target of the budget deficit elimination, not merely deficit reduction. However, the Prime Minister discouraged such frankness and directness and the minister acquiesced.

I believe that if the Minister of Human Resources Development had not utterly failed to provide a blueprint for reforming social spending, the finance minister might have presented the