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That response by the minister was disappointing. All that he did was to fall back on the legislation which he has brought forward which deals with the housing component in the budget. All that he did was to pretend that that legislation would have some substantive effect upon employment in Canada and upon the serious housing crisis in Canada today.

Lest any Member of Parliament be deceived by the minister's comments, I remind the minister and the members of the House that that bill was placed on the Order Paper some weeks ago. The measures contained in the bill were announced by the minister on budget night. When those ten Liberal Members of Parliament, including two cabinet ministers, wrote their letter condemning the government's economic policy and calling upon the Prime Minister to bring in new measures to stimulate the construction industry and reduce unemployment, they knew precisely what the content of that bill was. If the minister is asking us whether or not the measures he is proposing will provide substantive relief for Canadians, I ask him not to listen to us but to listen to his own Liberal backbenchers who have said that it is not enough and it is essential that new measures be taken.

● (1510)

I did not expect that this minister, who is the weakest and most ineffectual housing minister in Canadian history, would have announced a major new initiative today. I do believe, however, that he had a responsibility to remind Canadians of the commitment he made last summer when he talked about what he would be saying to Canadians from coast to coast. He stated that he would be fighting for substantive relief in the budget for Canadian home owners. The strong implication of his statements as well as those of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) was that unless they were able to get substantive relief for the people for whom they were concerned, they would be prepared to submit their resignations.

The ten Liberal Members of Parliament who signed that open letter to the Prime Minister clearly indicated their opinion of the worth of those budgetary provisions. Is the minister prepared to keep the commitment he has made? Is he prepared to put his job on the line on behalf of Canadians who are in jeopardy of losing their homes? Is he prepared to stand up for those many Canadian families who may never be able to achieve their dream of affordable housing? How does he explain his conduct as minister responsible for housing to his own constituents, quite apart from the commitments he has made across the country? How does he, as minister of housing, relate to his own constituents who find no relief in the budget in their efforts to renew their mortgages?

What does he say to his constituents, particularly the young Canadians who are looking for jobs? Unemployment among young Canadians is running at roughly twice the rate of unemployment among those over the age of 25. What response does he give those whom he represents in Parliament? What has he done for those who are affected by the government's economic policies? How will he vote today when he is called upon to represent his constituents?

For that matter, what has he done for his constituents on McLure Crescent who have radioactive soil in their backyards, aside from trying to sneak the soil somewhere else? He has done nothing for those constituents. What have he and his colleagues done for those constituents in Scarborough who have urea formaldehyde in their homes? Are they satisfied? How does the minister respond to them as their Member of Parliament when they ask him to represent them and speak to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) because they need help?

This debate concerns two issues. The first issue is clearly the question of the Canadian economy. The figures are evident. There are a million Canadians unemployed, and unemployment is particularly rampant among young Canadians. An increasing number of Canadians are being forced to surrender their homes, their businesses and their farms. The economic facts are very clear.

The second issue which the house is being asked to address today is our system of parliamentary democracy. Will members of the government caucus be free to represent their constituents and speak up when the government makes decisions which adversely affect their constituents, and second, will those Members of Parliament, when forced to decide between their constituents and their Prime Minister, put their country and constituents first? That is the issue which will be decided at five o'clock today.

We know what happened when the minister responsible for housing had to decide to either keep his commitment to resign or swallow his words and pretend that there were substantive measures in the budget. We know what the Minister of Agriculture did. We know as well what the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) did. When the minister spoke on television during the last election campaign he said he would resign from the Liberal government if they were elected and the interest rates continued to increase. When he was faced with record high interest rates, what did he do? He chose to swallow his words and compromise his integrity.

What will be the position of the Liberal Members of Parliament, such as the hon. member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly)? He has been very silent in Ottawa on the issue of the government's treatment of the budget. This intrigued me when I read the *Toronto Star* on January 7 when reference was made to the member for Scarborough Centre on this matter. The headline read, "Metro's Liberal MPs still upset with budget". It dealt with the hon. member this way:

MP Norm Kelly (L—Scarborough Centre), who said he got his licks during earlier caucus meetings against some features of the budget, is reserving judgment on whether more changes are needed.

He's meeting with car salesmen in his riding today. The auto sales industry is claiming that increasing taxes paid by employees provided with company cars will hit hard. The Canadian Automotive Leasing Association says the tax changes on parts could chop production of 150,000 cars and trucks annually.

Kelly also dislikes fighting inflation with high interest rates.

When has he said that in the House of Commons? When has he participated in the debate? When Liberal members have been asked to stand up and vote, when have we seen an