

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—THE BUDGET

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale) moved:

That this House is of the opinion that the budget is, as put by the Chief Government Whip, "a disgrace".

He said: Mr. Speaker, may I say that our party will be using only 10-minute speaking slots.

It is very easy to agree with the chief government Whip that this government's budget is a disgrace. I hope that the chief Whip will be here to participate in the debate to add to the voices from this side. We look forward to his voting with us in the House tonight.

Without having the benefit of his voice here to elaborate on why he finds the budget a disgrace, let me speculate. I think this budget will come to be known as the document which outlines the decline and fall of the Canadian economy. The most obvious symptom of this budget's inadequacy is the fact that today in Canada we have official unemployment rates of 11 per cent and this budget predicted that next year it would go down to only 10.8 per cent. It is devoid of hope and devoid of strategy in order to get Canadians working and to get our economy going.

The future of our country as a high-wage nation is in doubt today. We saw how Statistics Canada reported that the standard of living of the average Canadian family today has fallen to the level it occupied in 1976. We have heard the words of caution of a former deputy minister of finance of this government, Mickey Cohen, who said that we may be a high-wage society but our challenge today is to ensure that we are not a jobless society. Therefore, because of these challenges before us which were not addressed in the budget, and I shall elaborate, this budget is a disgrace.

• (1025)

Let us look at what the Tory legacy to Canadians is today. Since 1989 Canada's ability to compete globally has fallen from fourth to eleventh place. Since 1988 Canada has lost 16 per cent or 350,000 of its manufactur-

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ing jobs. We have been losing them at more than twice the U.S. rate.

What is even more alarming perhaps is that since this government took office in 1984 Canada's manufacturing productivity has grown at only two-third the rate of the G-7. Since 1980 according to recent studies by the Bank of Canada, our manufacturing productivity has declined 25 per cent against that of the United States.

Concerning hope for our young people, in 1984 Canada had a high-tech trade surplus of \$1 billion. Today that surplus has gone to a deficit of \$30 billion. Where are the jobs in high tech going? They are not here in Canada for our young people we are training.

Part of the reason we face a very bleak economic future based on what I have indicated is that this government has continued in its recent budget the policies it has adopted throughout the course of its history. It has been obsessed with the debt, but really it has not been able to get our deficit on an annual basis below \$30 billion since it has taken office, even though that was its chief plank. Instead we have seen a high tax, high interest, high dollar policy designed to drive every inch of inflation out of this economy even at the expense of costing us jobs and growth.

This government failed to realize that the only way it was going to get this deficit really under control was to get the incomes of Canadians up, to get Canadians off unemployment insurance and welfare so that they could become taxpayers. But no, it has adopted the alternative route of squeezing every ounce of vitality out of this nation. It does not realize that if we could take every unemployed Canadian off unemployment insurance and welfare today, we would have more than the some \$30 billion needed to deal with our annual deficit.

Canada is not without hope in spite of the legacy the Tories have given us. It is not going to be easy to reverse our economic decline. I suggest that we have to take a number of long-term measures which will require investing today and also a number of short-term measures so that we can enjoy a better future.

First, this deficit did not talk about education, but we have to address the issue of national standards in education and testing.