

The Budget—Mr. Oberle

dangers that were involved in such revolutionary policies, yet the farmers of Canada have lived for years with controls on the price of their products. Indeed, their income has been controlled by the percentage point that the Canadian consumer is prepared to pay in the super-market. Thus it is obvious to me that we are committed to maintaining the standard of living that is now enjoyed by other Canadians who are spending only about 18 per cent of their income on food, compared with other countries whose people have to pay much, much more. This is why we must find ways of subsidizing the Canadian farmer to a much greater extent and in ways different from those proposed by the budget. Let me assure the House that the needs of Canadian farmers would be much better served if we were to allow them a place in the free enterprise system and let them charge for their product what the product is worth in relation to other commodities.

With respect to world markets and the position that Canada must take in the marketing of our farm products, we must first assure our customers of continuity of supply. In order to do that we must have storage facilities and transportation systems much different from those that we have today.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, we must as a total community commit ourselves to helping the farmer in times of natural disaster of the sort that has plagued farmers in the Peace River country of northern British Columbia and Alberta during the past three years. Farmers in that area have suffered three consecutive crop failures. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) offered these farmers \$400 per farm in settlement. I was ashamed to relay that news to the people in my constituency because such a payment is an insult. That \$400 was the only income some of them had last year.

• (1540)

The problems I am referring to are not unique to the farming industry. Another example of such bungling is seen in our approach to the problems facing our native citizens. Economists have proven to the Department of Indian Affairs that if we could do away with their department and its 5,606 "experts", the \$386 million distributed annually, together with other funds handed out in gobs, would provide every Indian and Eskimo family with a guaranteed annual income of \$7,407. Is the increase in the budget designed to engage these experts or to help Indian people? The real problem, of course, is that money is usually the last thing these people really need. Most of the people I have talked about have never learned what it means in this complex world to get along on a budget. That should, of course, be not too surprising to our friends across the aisle because there is no one in Canada today with more problems living on a budget than our federal government.

As a youngster in a foreign land, I read about the great human qualities inherent in Canada's Indian people. I read about the beautiful culture and religion they once possessed and I find that, in an attempt to integrate these people into our own way of life, our own culture and religion, we have committed cultural and religious genocide on these people. Those are harsh words, but I have no other way to describe what is happening to our natives in Canada.

How else would one describe the discriminating ways in which they are treated in our courts, in our schools and on the street? How else would one describe the total ignorance we display in respect of any land claims and aboriginal rights they may have? How else would one describe the way in which we play them off against each other, by segregating them into factions called full-blooded Indians, half-breeds, Métis, Eskimos? It is high time we recognized the fact that we must establish our natives with a status called "citizens plus" and also provide them with every opportunity to maintain their own culture.

There are two reasons for which we must commit ourselves to immediate action. The first is that our moral laws, such as they are, will not permit us to allow these things to continue. The second is that if we do not make a genuine effort on behalf of these people now, we will have a crisis in Canada in the not too distant future that will make the negro problem in the United States look like a Sunday school picnic.

Our ignorance toward underprivileged people is not confined to Indians or natives alone. In fact, if we have any crisis in Canada today it is not an economic crisis, it is not an environmental crisis, it is a social crisis. I ask the minister, what has the budget really done to eliminate this crisis? We have a third of our population deprived, by their social background, of participation in our free enterprise system. A third of Canada's people are snowed under with payments for goods they cannot afford, by high interest rates and by an all-out effort by our government to keep them out of work. There is just no other way I can describe all the hand-outs and gobs of money to those who can come up with the best excuse for not wanting to work.

I am not concerned about the vast amount of money we are spending. Why, we have lots of money. Let us dig out more resources. I am concerned about the loss of productivity of those people. That, Mr. Speaker, is the real crisis. It reflects itself upon our position in world markets. There are just not enough people with their shoulders behind the wheel; and the budget does not encourage them to expand their businesses and put some of these people to work. It reflects itself in the way we treat those Canadians who really need help; the old, the sick, the handicapped and the poor. There is not a country in the world which can afford that kind of luxury, and I know that the days are counted in Canada.

I maintain that our government does not have the responsibility to provide everyone with a guaranteed income, but we do have the responsibility to provide everyone with the opportunity to work. I am ashamed, as a Canadian, with all our opportunities and potentialities, not to have lived up to these responsibilities. Why, Mr. Speaker, are we willing to accept 6 per cent or 7 per cent unemployment when countries with much less potential have a zero unemployment rate? Why is it that in Canada we never strive for perfection?

Having said all that, I would now like to say a few words about the apparent discovery of the west and the northern regions of our land. I find a gap between what is said in the Speech from the Throne and what is said in this budget, because there is no mention of the discovery of the west in the budget speech. Coming from the northern