

telling the people of this nation that he has had nothing to do with the plight of Canadians, that unemployment and economic stagnation are none of his doing. No, even the people of Fundy-Royal must have been somewhat taken aback to hear the Prime Minister tell the world that I, as a member of the opposition, in the short period of time that I have been in this House, a matter of days, that I am really responsible for the whole mess, that I am the enemy.

In view of the Prime Minister's statement I do not think that I could be accused of being paranoid when I say that I do not trust the Prime Minister of Canada, I do not trust the party that he leads, and I do not trust the government that he heads. Further, I submit that the people of Canada do not trust this government, that the people of Canada do not trust their leader, and they will convey this message loudly and clearly when given the opportunity.

In summation, the problems that beset the people of this country prior to the budget, still beset and will continue to beset the nation. The budget is about as much use to Canadians as a hairnet is to Yul Brynner.

This party and its members have and will continue to act in an accountable manner as the official opposition in this House. It is our duty to criticize, and with the present government our task is not difficult. We will continue to be constructive, we will continue to be responsible, and I suppose in the eyes of the Prime Minister and his followers, we will continue to be the enemy. But let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we will persevere, we will not be deterred, we will not be intimidated, nor will we falter, nor will we fail.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not want to interrupt the hon. member who has just spoken because I understood it was his maiden speech. Therefore, I did not think he should be interrupted. However, he did make some comments about the fact that members of the party I belong to did not believe in democracy. Let me assure him, in case he is worried about it, that there are no more stout defenders of parliament and democracy than the members of this party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) that that is not a point of order but a point of debate.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is a point of fact.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I have not come to my point of order yet. I am not asking the hon. member to withdraw, or raising a question of privilege. I am merely asking him to consult his predecessor, the generous and fair-minded former member for Fundy-Royal, to ask of him the facts.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to take part in this most important budget debate. As I

The Budget—Mr. Breau

represent a constituency in the province of New Brunswick, I believe it is fitting for me to congratulate the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Corbett). It is an honour for a member to arrive at this House of Commons, as I did some ten years ago with you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the hon. member will do a good job of representing the constituents of Fundy-Royal.

It is not customary that we criticize or respond too harshly when a member speaks for the first time. The fact that we respectfully listened to the speech of the hon. member for Fundy-Royal does not mean that we cannot respond to it. However, we will wait until he has made a few more speeches, listen to them carefully, and note what he says. Being a fellow New Brunswick member, I again congratulate him on the presentation of his maiden speech in the House today.

It is important in this budget debate to situate the perspective or economic context in which the government had to present its budget. In my view the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) has presented a very responsible budget. The economy of the western world is recovering from and adjusting to the very severe economic dislocations created by the energy crisis of 1973-74.

If one looked at the economy of Canada today, he would realize that over two-thirds of what we produce in this country is exported, mainly to the United States. One cannot talk about the economy of Canada and, therefore, the policy of this government, without situating that policy in this kind of context.

[*Translation*]

Therefore it is important in my view to realize the Canadian government's objective is, first to influence the domestic economy, and second to help those who are in greatest need of help to adjust to economic conditions, and help mitigate the negative effects of these conditions on Canadians with the lowest salaries and those who live on pensions and cannot by themselves adjust to the new economic situation.

I submit this is a responsible budget, sir, because it aims at influencing the Canadian economy, to the extent the government can do so. Reference is made of course to economic stimulation. Hon. members opposite, especially Conservative members, suggest we should use the fiscal system to stimulate the economy. But, Mr. Speaker, how could we stimulate the economy and in addition have a budget deficit topping \$12 billion? Some 25 per cent, or rather 30 per cent of the total Canadian government budget is made up of government deficit. Such being the case, I do not feel it would have been possible for the government to provide much more stimulus than they did. My opinion is we did so, as far as the domestic economy is concerned, by indexing income tax at 9 per cent for this year, which means more than \$1 million when the reduction in unemployment insurance premiums is added. And with the reduction from 12 per cent to 9 per cent of the federal sales tax, this means more than \$1 billion will be left in the hands of Canadians, not to mention the effects of the tax changes on Canadian firms which are difficult to estimate accurately.