

*Government Orders*

the things required to ensure the pension system is sustainable in the long term.

The budget states the basic principle for reform in terms of seniors programs is to ensure the system continues to be affordable and that we have some goals for changes in 1997. The budget states these basic principles: undiminished protection for all seniors who are less well off, including those receiving the GIS; continuing full indexation to protect seniors from inflation; the provision of OAS benefits on the basis of family income, as is now the case with the GIS; greater progressivity of benefits by income level; and control of program costs.

The bottom line remains that Canada is still the best country in the world and remains a model for other nations. With the budget the government has demonstrated leadership. Canadians know that we will continue to benefit from a number of social programs that reflect our understanding of community. These programs are implemented in a way that permits governments to take into account changing times and changing needs.

It is in the spirit of federal-provincial co-operation and to provide the greatest possible opportunity for our economic recovery that I join in the debate and support the budget.

As someone who is an immigrant to the country, I know there are concerns by all who are in the process of applying for permanent residence. As the minister of immigration said, we are all in this together, those who are joining us, those who are here and those who want to be here.

• (1610)

The fee is set out in typical Liberal fashion. As a caring and compassionate government we ensure that no one will be turned away as a result. Loan programs and other ways of assisting are also included in the process.

This is an excellent budget and I call on everyone in the House to endorse it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, who told us about the interesting things she sees in the budget. I had the opportunity to travel with the hon. member when the Committee on Human Resources Development criss-crossed the country. I would like to know if the hon. member is as satisfied with the measures announced in the budget as with the lack of certain measures.

Was she not hoping that something would be provided for social housing? Indeed, it is clearly established that the best way to fight poverty in Canada is to provide a dwelling, at a reasonable cost, to people who often have to spend 40, 50 or 60

per cent of their budget on housing, because other forms of assistance are inadequate. Does the member not think that the budget should have provided something in that regard?

During the committee hearings held across the country, did the member hear anyone say that the government had to take \$700 million out of the UI fund, as provided in the budget? Did anyone ever tell the committee that cuts should be made to the UI program? When the committee travelled to Rivière-du-Loup, did anyone ask that all transportation subsidies be eliminated immediately, that the whole economic structure of the region be changed without any transition period to adjust, and that the UI fund also be reduced, thus leading people to leave the region? Did the member hear any such thing and is she pleased with this budget as regards social housing and the cuts affecting the unemployment insurance fund and the transportation subsidies?

[*English*]

**Ms. Augustine:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recollect for my hon. friend our experience across the country. Over and over we heard the messages. Maybe we interpreted them with different ears. However, people told us over and over about jobs and the creation of jobs. They told us that the best social security for individuals was the ability to find work and the ability to provide for their families.

It is also important to note that the individuals who spoke to us on a number of issues stressed quite strongly the fact that they wanted the involvement of the federal government. They wanted some principles, some national standards, and some way of operating that would ensure protection and security in the fact that the federal government would provide the necessary support.

As federal legislators, the expectation from us is to ensure that we provide the kind of economic climate in which individuals will find jobs.

**Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of one of the toughest budgets in Canadian history. A tough budget was needed to keep the country on track. It is a budget that Canadians have been calling on the government to table and I am proud to stand in my place today to support it.

We have answered the demands of Canadians with a tough but fair budget. We have taken the necessary fiscal action in a sensitive manner that addresses the priorities of all Canadians. No doubt there is pain involved, but the pain does not hit like a sledgehammer. A sledgehammer would devastate everything around the target. Rather, it is like a bow and arrow. We hit the targets dead on without devastating everything around us.