

The Budget

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the humour of the hon. member and he undoubtedly will be the first guest if there ever are guests at the museum for humour. He will intrigue us all. The whole country will benefit from his humour. It is too bad, having made such a humorous speech, it did not have some reality in it. One of these days he will find out that unemployment rates are determined by Statistics Canada and not by the Unemployment Insurance Commission. After he is around here for a while he will learn that.

Let us get down to something else he talked about. He grabbed viciously at page 135, dealing with the savings people make on the surtax. He did not go over to page 138. If he would like to go over to page 138, let us talk about the savings of a single parent earning \$20,000 a year. It is \$639, not bad.

If we get down to a single parent with \$100,000, it is \$328, but get down further. These tables are there and they are substantially different. That is really what counts.

• (1630)

There is a program to reduce a surtax. A surtax is an extra tax. That surtax is coming down in year one by 1 per cent, from 5 per cent to 4 per cent, in year two from 4 per cent to 3 per cent and hopefully, as the minister comes forward next year with a budget, he will be able to go down from 3 per cent to 2 per cent or 3 per cent to 1 per cent, or maybe eliminate it completely as this country grows, as it is growing as business confidence is clearly demonstrated in this budget.

He talks about the dollar. Does he not realize the dollar in exchange markets with the United States is strong? Would he have a weak dollar? Would he have a chicken dollar? It is strong, but it is down 500 basis points since the first of the year.

What kind of an economy would he like? Would he like a strong economy like Germany, the largest trading country in the world, where its currency and relation to the dollar has done nothing but harden year after year after year? Or would he like a weak currency like the currency of Argentina?

It is clearly the Liberal policy to have the Argentina policy. Borrow more money because borrowing only got you in trouble. Build more public works with more borrowed money so the rate of interest can go up and up and up and put the country out of work.

If borrowing made the country strong and if borrowing made the country rich, this country with its debts would be the richest in the world by far.

If the hon. member's policy in his tribute to humour is to borrow more money for more projects, then we would not be in the mess we are in. I guess that is the humour of the Liberal Party.

Let me advise him too, while he is shivering in his boots, that should I get the nomination for the Progressive Conservative Party in Mississauga South I will be contesting the election as it comes up.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I hope that those who were paying attention to this debate will note that the member complained that I used the table on page 135 that showed that there was only a \$2 reduction in the surtax on personal income.

Then he asked me why did I not refer to page 138. Please note that he started to quote from the page but when he got a look at the numbers he swallowed hard and shucked them aside and said what does it matter?

Let us quote from page 138. Page 138 is the combined effect of both the surtax reduction, the \$2 cut, and the child tax benefit. The member wanted me to quote that page. Let me quote from it. If you are a single parent and you have an income of \$10,000 a year, standing right here or a parent with \$100,000 a year standing right here, what does the government do?

It gives the combined child tax benefit and surtax reduction for a single parent with a \$10,000 income of \$500. If you make \$100,000, 10 times more income, you get a benefit reduction of \$328. That is why the member swallowed hard and sat down. He realized that it is totally indefensible that the total tax benefit to a single parent with a \$10,000 a year income is \$500 and the same person with \$100,000 a year income—10 times more—gets a break almost as big as that person starving to death with only a \$10,000 income.