

*The Budget—Mr. Mazankowski*

reads, "Bye Bye. End of Trudeau era is greeted with relief". That has inspired some confidence, about the only confidence that has emanated from this Government in the last little while.

Canadians are rejoicing today because they see a new era on the horizon. The landscape has changed somewhat. I think that is all for the good. I should say, however, Mr. Speaker, that one cannot blame the current Prime Minister for all of the difficulties, particularly the derision, contempt and disregard he has held for western Canada. The Prime Minister did not do it alone. We know what the current Minister of Finance and former Minister of Energy did for western Canada when he brought in the odious and pernicious National Energy Program which wiped out hundreds of thousands of jobs and small businesses.

We remember the former finance minister, Mr. Donald Macdonald, when he was Energy Minister and the attacks that he levelled at western Canada. We also know it was Mr. Turner, who is now aspiring to be the new leader, who really set us on this road to huge deficit financing. It is interesting to note that all Liberal Party members across the country are now rallying around Mr. Turner. It is strange to see them rallying around a quitter, but that is the way it is. Say anything, do anything to get into power; that is the most important thing.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) came to Edmonton last week and lectured Liberals there. As reported in *The Edmonton Journal*, he said:

—Alberta should welcome the collapse of the boom because the megaprojects were "too big, too difficult to manage, too difficult to finance and too risky".

Implicit in the Minister's statement is the fact that he is suggesting Albertans should be grateful for our 14 per cent unemployment rate, a crashing real estate market, and that we should be grateful for the bankruptcies, the foreclosures and the shattered dreams which have stripped away billions of dollars of revenue. This revenue has been transferred from the west into other areas, particularly into pork barrelling programs. Liberals who attended that meeting cheered him. They should have hissed him out of the room. That NEP constituted the downfall of the only engine of economic growth and development existing in the country at that time.

We must make sure that the current Prime Minister does not take all the blame for the failures of this Government over the last 15 years because Liberals were all by his side cheering him along. Let us take a look at the trial and error policies the Liberals have imposed upon us. It has been a policy of "impose and then back off". What about FIRA? It was heralded as great to have, but when it was obvious that FIRA was destroying investor confidence in this country in undermining the integrity of our economy, the Liberals backed off. What about the National Energy Program? Every time this Minister of Energy announces a change, he is heralded as doing a great thing for the energy sector. But the Liberals destroyed the energy sector in the first place.

The Liberals have a policy of destroy and then restore. The Liberals are doing the same thing with VIA. Look at their

defence policy. Look at what they have done to NATO. The Liberals have cut back on NATO expenditures by 50 per cent. Now there is great interest to restore the commitment to NATO. What about the reduction in the defence budget? We did not see anybody in the Liberal Party coming to the defence of the three prairie provinces, which were going to be relegated to second-class status under the original amending formula that was advanced. There is no question that there is more to the Liberal Party than simply the Prime Minister of the day. There have been Ministers, like the former Minister of Multiculturalism, who have suggested there is an attitudinal problem with the Liberal government of manipulation and ballyhoo, and to mention the activists who have said that the Party is governed by non-accountable, non-legitimate, non-elected members of the Party for manipulative electoral shams, and that the polls, propaganda and patronage are orchestrated by a small elite.

That is why we are in trouble today, that is why there is mistrust, and that is why this Government has no credibility. It really does not matter whether you change leaders or not. The problem is so entrenched and the attitudinal problem is so immersed within the Liberal Party that the only thing that can turn the country around is an election and a brand-new government. Canada needs a new government that will create jobs as its number one priority, that will build upon our natural strengths, that will restore the dynamic prospects of the agriculture, the fisheries, the mining, and the energy sector. We need a government that will turn those natural advantages into economic advantages. Until we have a government that is committed to doing that, we will stagnate and falter.

**Mr. Ferguson:** Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued by the comments of the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) and his reference to what is happening south of the border. Is the Hon. Member suggesting that we in Canada should go along with policies that leave over 40 per cent of our people living below the poverty line, as is the situation in the United States? Is the Hon. Member suggesting that we should not lower the number of those who are living below the poverty line? We have been trying to assist those people through this Budget.

Is the Hon. Member suggesting we should destroy our social safety net that we have for these people? We want to try to lower the number of people living below the poverty line so that fewer are caught in the transition taking place in the economy. The Hon. Member for Vegreville does not mention that expenditures in relation to GNP are 33 per cent lower than in 1979. I believe it is 9.2 per cent this year compared to 13.9 per cent for 1979.

The Hon. Member makes remarks about the "odious" National Energy Program being responsible for the slow-down. What does the Hon. Member propose we should do with natural gas in the west, where approximately 11,000 wells in Alberta are shut in due to lack of markets? The Canadian government removed the natural gas and gas liquids tax as of February 1, 1984. What has the Alberta Government done in