

The Budget—Mr. Lundrigan

which there are large pockets of unemployment, where there are extremely high costs of transportation, low income, and centripetal relocation toward certain parts of Canada which results in a brain drain and the like. These are some of the characteristics of regional disparity. I would like to have heard from the minister a clear statement on government policy in this respect.

As far as government announcements and policies are concerned, we have had a great many escape-hatches and red herrings. A moment ago the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) talked about red herrings. I tell the Canadian people that there are more red herrings in parliament than there were in Placentia Bay. I can talk about red herrings there and here, because I have seen both and am aware of what is going on.

The people of this nation are very disillusioned at the moment because they have been promised the stars, a just society and the elimination of regional disparity, but these things have not come about. I could refer to a number of bills which have been referred to as curing these problems. The house leader is very competent in calculating what the government is doing and is not doing. If he were here he could tell us that 75 per cent of our time has been taken up with such issues as NATO. NATO is very important! Red China has been brought on the carpet. That is a real red herring. We have had the amendments to the Criminal Code; we have set everything up for abortions and homosexuality in Canada. The Vatican has been brought into our discussions and has become quite a controversial issue. We have had the government reorganization bill.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member would permit a question?

Mr. Lundrigan: I have only a few minutes left. When I have finished my speech I will be delighted to respond to any question put by the Minister of Finance.

An hon. Member: Let him raise a question of privilege.

Mr. Lundrigan: Or he can rise on a point of order or question of privilege and I will gladly respond. The government reorganization bill took up a good deal of the time of this house. It is like the jellyfish trying to reshape itself. We have had the official languages bill, which again took up a good deal of the time of the house. Although I believe

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that the language question and having bilingual Canadians is very important, the basic and most important problem facing this country as far as unity is concerned is the economic one.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lundrigan: Let us consider the situation of a typical rural farmer of Quebec. Quebec has a great deal in common with the part of Canada from which I come. If you gave this typical Quebec farmer \$13,000 or \$15,000 a year, put a solid chunk of money in his pocket, gave him a coloured television set, a good car in which to drive to work, good roads upon which to drive, enough bread in his cupboard and a good school to which he could send his children, what do you think he would say about the language problem? I do not suggest he would not say anything about it, because if he is from the province I have mentioned he might very well have something to say about the problem, but I suggest he would be a fairly happy man.

● (9:00 p.m.)

We should be assisting those parts of Canada which are disadvantaged because of economic circumstances which frequently have political causes, such as ministers and governments, who do not have the gumption to take issue with these economic problems. They do not do so because they just love keeping their seats warm. If we had a government that took issue with some of our economic problems, I do not think we would have as much talk about the language problem as we have today. In any event there are many Canadians in this nation who are disappointed with a government which, after a year in this parliament, has nothing to tell them so far as economic policies are concerned, so far as programs of development are concerned, and nothing to tell them about the cost of living or the unemployment problem. The minister can sit there and think he is doing a great job. Undoubtedly he is making a great effort, but let him not try to tell the unemployed Canadians, he is doing a great job or the people who now have to pay 2.5 per cent more for their week's groceries than they did in January of this year. Let him not say this to the Canadian people because they will just ask him embarrassing questions. All of us here are protected from the average Canadian because we are removed from him. Perhaps this secluded and protected environment of parliament means that we