

Borrowing Authority Act

in terms of expenditure cuts, which account for about 70 per cent of the total reduction, the other 30 per cent coming from taxes. Taxes are finely balanced between individuals and corporations as they are among various individuals. The needy are receiving a substantial break through the innovative sales tax refund which more than offsets the 3 per cent surtax.

The Member continues to repeat the argument, which has no substance, that the Government deserves no credit for the 580,000 jobs which have been created since September, 1984. That statement is totally without merit. It was this Government that dismantled the National Energy Program with alacrity and dispatch. It was this Government that saw how negative the Foreign Investment Review Agency was. Many people were putting forward numbers with regard to approval levels. However, the word was out around the world about the needless problems encountered by people who applied, only to be turned down. Under the leadership of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) that was changed. Not only was the name changed, but investment is now welcomed into the country, which investment creates jobs.

The Government, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), and the entire front bench have done a tremendous amount to create a new climate of confidence in the country, which will lead to even greater numbers of jobs by the end of this year and next year. The Member has tremendous talent in this area. I ask him to be a little more complete and a little more direct and honest with regard to the substance of the Budget. Give us a little credit on a Friday afternoon.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, because it is a Friday afternoon, I am actually going to do that. There are three parts of this Budget which I found quite interesting, useful, and helpful.

An Hon. Member: You almost said "good".

Mr. Langdon: I will even say "good". The first is the principle that when tax changes are introduced there should be a rebate for the poor to ensure that they are not squeezed as hard as others. I think the Hon. Member made a technical mistake. The rebate program is not for the 3 per cent tax increase, but for the 1 per cent sales tax increase. In response to that, I certainly offer praise.

The attempt to make investment grants for industry more responsive to the varying needs across the country is a good step forward. It is good because those grants were, by and large, ineffective in persuading companies to undertake investment. They respond to aggregate demand, but not to Government hand-outs in most cases. They do respond with respect to location. By leaving certain incentives in for Atlantic Canada, the Government has given a kind of skewing to Atlantic Canada which is deserved, given the much higher unemployment rate which exists there.

Finally, I think that the changes being implemented by the Farm Credit Corporation with respect to its commodity-related mortgages for farmers is a useful innovation. Unfortunately, the Farm Credit Corporation told the Committee on Agriculture last Thursday morning that there are about

39,000 distressed families in the country. The corporation will be able to help only 6,000. Therefore, it is a step, albeit a small one.

Despite the fact that it is Friday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I would not want my response to a question such as that of the Hon. Member to be entirely positive. The abolition of the National Energy Program, which, of course, was met with such glee, has now created major problems in Alberta as oil prices decline. They have come, once again, to see the virtue of regulated prices as they did during the 1950s.

With respect to FIRA, my experience in my constituency has been that exactly what we feared would happen has happened. U.S. companies have started to merge. They have taken money out of our country to finance those mergers, and we have lost both capital and jobs in the process. In any event, Mr. Speaker, you must judge a Budget by its basic thrust. For the reasons which I indicated in my speech, I think its basic thrust is wrong.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite said that Albertans had come to see the virtue of regulated prices. I happen to be a Member from Alberta, and I would like to assure the Member opposite that Albertans see no virtue in regulated prices. They have not done so for the nearly seven years during which I have sat in this Chamber. Indeed, they see great harm in that. They have seen the imposition of regulated prices bring about a partial collapse of the entire Canadian economy. They have seen suicides, spousal battering, and child abuse as a consequence of ill-fated regulated prices. For the Member to stand in this Chamber and indicate that Albertans see the virtue of regulated prices is to ignore the reality of our historical experience with regulated prices. The Member would indeed be hard pressed to find anyone outside of his own Party in the entire population of Alberta who would see the virtue of regulated prices.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I predict that very shortly, if the price of oil continues to fall, we will be faced with a request from the Alberta provincial Government for the establishment of a floor price for oil in the country just as was the case in the 1950s. It is that which I take to be a new recognition that regulation on the upward trend of pricing, which may hurt you at the time, is also something which can defend you when prices fall through the floor. At the moment in Alberta there are a great many economic operations which are facing potential collapse which should not be facing that kind of pressure simply because of what is happening to world oil prices. On that basis, I think a floor price for oil produced in this country, in order to keep an oil industry for the future, is something which I support, and I suspect a great many Albertans support it as well.

● (1650)

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I found the Hon. Member's comments concerning the National Energy Program very interesting. Coming from that region myself, I do not see where the NEP would have helped Alberta in the present