

The Budget—Mr. Oberle

• (1530)

Shortly, during the month of March, there will be a series of seminars across Canada, or let me call them missions. Over 40 trade representatives from our 80 offices around the world will be meeting in nine cities in Canada. They will be taking a sector by sector approach that is aimed at trying to identify for Canadian manufacturers and suppliers specific market opportunities in specific countries around the world.

In the minute that I have left to me, one matter I might emphasize is that this is a crucial time to move forward. It is not a time for the faint-hearted; it is a time for the confident. I am confident that the Canadian manufacturing industry, employers and employees, are equal to the task of creating a new trading environment. They are equal to the challenge of innovation and of developing new markets for Canadian products. They are equal to the task of helping us expand the markets of Canada. But let us be under no illusion: this is going to require determination. It will require a variety of measures and the support of this House for the kind of measures contained in the budget, measures aimed at making the manufacturing and the processing industries of Canada competitive on a worldwide basis.

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I speak for the first time to this distinguished gathering. I feel in doing so I am more privileged than any other member of this assembly since I did not have the good fortune to inherit this land by birth. I came to Canada a little more than 20 years ago, and as far as I can determine I am the first Canadian coming from Germany following two world wars who ever acceded to such high office. My election victory was not just a personal victory; it was a victory also for all Canadians who, like myself, foster a dream of multiculturalism.

As a new member, I may at times have to call on Your Honour's indulgence as I am sure you will find that my approach to the problems presented to the House is that of a practical man, one who has learned through his involvement in business to look for simple solutions to problems which at first appear complex. There is not another country in the world where there are so many opportunities for a man, where there is such a vast horizon and a chance to fulfil one's wildest dream so long as one has the guts to dream it and to work at it.

In the deliberations of this House I have found myself taking an approach in sharp contrast to that taken by most of my colleagues who, by virtue of their professional training, are never ready or prepared to do anything that is unprecedented. I have learned through the best school, that of experience, that the worst practice is to do nothing that has not been done before.

In Canada today we are faced with problems for which there are no precedents, all of which requiring a solution that cannot be found in the great volumes in our library. Yes, some of these problems provide men of the twentieth century with a unique challenge—a challenge to try something fresh and to embark upon something new. But we must muster the courage to admit that in some areas of our endeavours we have been going in the wrong direction. We must not be discouraged by the monstrous task

[Mr. Gillespie.]

of amending the laws of this country, some of which are in drastic conflict with the needs of our time.

I should like to make a few comments in connection with the remarks made by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis). He compared the provincial governments and some of the activities taking place in the western regions of our land. I would have liked to rise on a point of order while he was speaking, Mr. Speaker, but since my time is short and I will shortly be catching a plane, I did not interrupt him. The hon. member referred to the province of Alberta and the disastrous oil exploration policies of that government.

May I tell him that today I met with a group of people from northern British Columbia who had just driven down the Alaska highway behind a string of trucks which were pulling out of the province of British Columbia. These were people who had been engaged in exploration and who had been making a contribution to the economy of British Columbia. This makes me wonder why the hon. member's party has such hordes of supporters in the western provinces. Maybe they are leeching off the corporate welfare bums out there. There is no New Democratic Party in the have-not provinces of this country; the party is where all the rich people live. The hon. member has been to my riding, and if the same government is still in office the next time he comes out he might not get the steak that was fed to him previously, but a peanut butter sandwich.

The hon. gentleman's indulgence in political skullduggery has made me digress, so may I now say something about the budget. I want to talk about some of the problems that are not unique to my constituency and the people I represent, but are of great concern to all Canadians. Certainly they are relevant to the debate before the House.

Since such a major part of my constituency comprises agricultural land and so many of the people I represent are affected by the outdated, unimaginative and, yes, disastrous policies of the Department of Agriculture, I should like to make known my views about the farming industry. I hope the government does not consider that the hand-down of the family farm from father to son, when the father dies, is a solution to the situation farmers are facing in Canada today.

The policies pursued by the Department of Agriculture cannot be interpreted in any other way than that they are designed to do away with an industry that has caused the Canadian consumer and, as a result, this parliament so many problems over the last generation. The budget is now solving certain problems by removing tariffs on some farm commodities so these commodities can enter Canada at a cheaper rate. Our farm credit policies, our transportation policies in relation to farm commodities and our marketing policies for farm products have been worked out by people in the department, all of which seem to be designed to destroy an industry that is so vital to our economy and to the preservation of the way of life for the greatest part of this country. Farming is an industry with which, if it were properly managed, we could make a great contribution to the rest of the world.

During the last election campaign we heard much about wage and price controls. The government pointed out the