

*The Budget—Mr. Collette*

increase, that they were out a little in their calculations, but they were prepared to make the lifestyle adjustments to accommodate the short-term surge in interest rates. Unfortunately, they renewed their mortgage at 22 per cent. As I said to him, when rates come down, if you have an open mortgage you can renegotiate rather than be locked in to these exorbitant rates for three or five years.

The impression is being given by the opposition that those who are renewing mortgages today at 20 and 22 per cent will be locked in and will suffer in the years ahead. Granted, there will be some short-term dislocation. That is the unfairness of the system of mortgage financing in this country. Some people who have had to renew their one, three or five-year mortgage in the last couple of months have really been dealt a heavy blow by the high rates.

The question has to be asked whether it is the government's obligation to subsidize people across the board, to give blanket subsidies for mortgages. Listening to the official opposition and the NDP, one would assume they want everybody in this country subsidized. My question to them is, who will pay for the subsidy? I will tell you where the revenues will come from. They will come from the ordinary taxpayers, many of whom do not have mortgages. Many are retired and their homes are paid for. Many are new Canadians who perhaps tried to pay off their mortgages in a short period of time. These are the people who will be paying for an across-the-board subsidy.

What about the renters? Half of those in my constituency in metropolitan Toronto live in rental accommodation. Would it be fair or just to expect those people from their general tax revenues to subsidize mortgage rates, as proposed by the leader of the NDP (Mr. Broadbent) who advocated the government should subsidize the spread between 15 per cent and the actual mortgage renewal figure? I could not look my constituents in the eye and say to them that is fair, equitable and just.

Who should we subsidize? Who should we help? The government said in the speech from the throne that assistance would be forthcoming. If you read the budget documents, there is no doubt that that promise has been discharged. I have no compunction or hesitation in telling my constituents that we have sheltered those Canadians who are on the verge of losing their homes.

That is what the minister responsible for housing has been saying in the House these past few weeks. He has been pilloried unfairly, unmercifully by the opposition in a callous way. They have been misrepresenting what he has been saying, twisting his answers. That minister has shown more compassion, sensitivity and understanding about the social needs of Canadians than will ever be shown by the likes of those characters on the other side.

That minister has suffered day in and day out. I say, and my colleagues agree, that that minister has shown compassion. He has fought long and hard for assistance for those who are in dire straits. He has delivered in this budget because this budget will help those who are in the direst of circumstances, those who but for this budget would be out on the street. I

believe the criticism directed at the minister is totally unjustified and is not one of the most pleasant things I have heard during my time as a Member of Parliament.

● (1750)

Is it the responsibility of the government to subsidize people across the board? Is it the duty of the government to subsidize the needy? Or is it the duty of the government to subsidize everyone irrespective of their lifestyle? Indeed, is it the duty of the government to subsidize lifestyle? I say, no. The Tories always talk about self-reliance and about standing on one's own two feet. There is an obligation that people have today when they enter into the purchase of a home. Surely they have an obligation to look at their own financial situation; how much money they have in the bank; how much is their down payment; how much their repayments will be on a monthly basis. Is it not also their obligation to foresee a downturn in the economy? Recessions are not new. Downturns in economic activity are not new. The people I described earlier, the seniors in my constituency went through the depression and have paid for their homes because they knew the good times could not always last. They knew that the carousel sometimes has to slow down. That is what has happened in the last few years. There are many who did not have the foresight to recognize the realities and uncertainties of life in general.

This government has ruled most of the past twenty years. We have seen some of the most prosperous economic growth in this period. We would like that unbridled economic growth to continue in the future. When we observe other countries we realize that we cannot deliver at the same level that we have been used to in the last twenty years. There has been some levelling off. We must now stop and regroup our economic policies and proceed forward and lay the foundation for economic renewal for the years ahead. That is what this budget addresses.

There is another side to the housing crisis in this country. There are legitimate problems, but the word crisis is used indiscriminately every day in the House. I do not really think Canadians take to heart these hyperboles from the opposition that are littering the carpet of this chamber every day.

Another issue with respect to housing is the amount of rental accommodation available. It is not a problem across the board. It is a problem in selected high growth areas. I should like to refer to the speech the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday. It can be found on page 12795 of *Hansard*. The Leader of the Opposition made his plaintive lament for renters who, he claims, are injured because of this budget. He was following up on a theme that was started by the member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath), in his usual hysterical way, concerning the MURB program.

What did the Tories do for renters in this country when they ruled in 1979, in that hilarious hiatus, that brief fleeting moment, that incalculable interregnum of despair? What did they do for renters? I will tell you what they did, Mr. Speaker. They introduced a mortgage tax deductibility scheme. This would have raked the federal treasury of three or four billion