

The Budget—Mr. Benjamin

have got all the blame. We will give the Government credit, all the credit in the world for the drop in unemployment.

I am sure my good friends on the Government side will agree that whether unemployment is 9.8 per cent, 10.8 per cent or 11.8 per cent of the workforce, even if it is down to 9.8 per cent, that percentage is still a bloody national disgrace. I hope there is no disagreement on that score.

The child tax credit refund measure is nice. A starving man will take half of loaf of bread or half a slice any time. I will give the Government credit, but I do not know why the Minister would plead for thanks on something that was so obviously and desperately needed that even the Tories had to recognize and make some modest moves about it. If that is what the Government wants thanks for, we will give it thanks for crumbs.

The hysteria of the Conservatives and the business community, both national and international, about the deficit has hypnotized them. I would have liked to have seen more measures in the Budget not only to create more jobs but to save jobs.

I received a telex today addressed to myself and my colleagues, the Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong) and four colleagues from the Conservative Party: the Hon. Member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. St. Germain), the Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour), the Hon. Member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers), and the Hon. Member for Calgary East (Mr. Kindy). It is a modest request, Mr. Speaker, which has been made of this Government for the last two years and the previous Government for Lord knows how many years. It has to do with the tariff on steel and steel products from South Korea. They are asking for a measure that deprives South Korea of reduced tariffs on steel afforded that country under the general preferential tariff. Incidentally, this telex shows management and labour co-operation. The telex is from Mr. Phillips, President of the Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Company, and Mr. Stevens, Director, District 3 United Steelworkers. They point out:

No other major industrial country gives Korea such special treatment on steel because they recognize that Korea has the most modern steel industry in the world.

I do not blame Korea for that. Following the Korean war many countries, including Canada, helped Korea rebuild its entire economy, including the steel industry. The Koreans deserved preferential treatment then, but they certainly do not anymore.

Without the preferential treatment we could save jobs as well as create jobs in Port Moody, Red Deer, Edmonton, Calgary and Regina. There are only 1,400 people working now in the steel industry there and there could be at least 2,400.

This telex is asking, and I am asking on behalf of my colleagues from Regina East and my colleagues from the four Conservative ridings, Conservative for the time being, the Hon. Members for Mission-Port Moody, Edmonton-Strathcona, Red Deer and Calgary East, that the Minister or some other appropriate member of the Government amend the ways and means motion on customs and tariffs to withdraw the

general preferential tariff privileges on Korean steel and steel products and revert those items to normal tariff treatment. Because of all the talk we have heard about free trade in this place and outside from the business and corporate community as well as from the Government, the question is not whether it is free trade but whether it is fair trade. That and many other items are not fair trade. I include in that trade with our friends to the south of us.

The Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain was questioned by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow), about the United States Government and the European Economic Community and its respective Governments subsidizing grain, dairy and livestock producers. In this instance grain was the question. The Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain missed the point entirely, and so did the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) when speaking at meetings of farmers in Western Canada just last weekend.

What the Government of Canada and what this Budget are saying to western grain producers is, in effect, produce more, according to the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain. Increase our efficiency and produce more. He knows better than I do that our grain producers have produced more. They have produced themselves into losses. They have become so efficient they have put themselves out of business. There are no grain producers and farmers anywhere in the world who have become more efficient and productive than Canadian farmers. The thanks they got for it was the response of the Minister of Agriculture to grain producers in western Canada last weekend. He said that they do not understand the international market. Our grain producers damn well understand the international market and they are sick and tired of having this Government and the previous Liberal Government telling them that they, on their own, either through the Canadian Wheat Board or by themselves, are expected to compete with the Treasuries of the United States, the European Economic Community, Argentina, and Australia.

● (1540)

It is not proper for a Government of any political stripe to subject our grain producers to the will of the so-called market forces when the Treasuries of other nations subsidize their farmers to the tune of \$9, \$20, and \$24 a tonne. We cannot ask our grain producers to deal with that on their own. That is patently unfair and is patent discrimination against our grain producers. Regardless of free trade and free market forces, the national Treasury must support our primary producers by making the competition equal.

The present Government is hypnotized by the deficit, as was the previous Government. At the end of World War II, in 1985-86 dollars the deficit in Canada was twice as high as it is now, regardless of how you measure it. I was reading an article the other day which indicated that the national deficit in 1933, translated into 1986 dollars, was three times as high as it is now, whether measured on a per capita basis or as a percentage of the Gross National Product.