

The Budget—Miss Nicholson

rate in September 1984 was 12.1 per cent, but under a Progressive Conservative Government it went down to 10.8 per cent. In British Columbia, in September 1984, under a Liberal administration the unemployment rate was 15.1 per cent, and under this Government it has gone down to 13.6 per cent at this time. In Canada generally, under a Liberal administration in September 1984, the unemployment rate was 11.7 per cent. It has gone down under this Government to 9.7 per cent.

Does that mean that this Government is satisfied, contrary to the attitude developed under the previous administration? Of course not—never. Even with those numbers we are not satisfied. We think they are too high and that is why the projection for next year, according to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), is for a lower unemployment rate. Is it any surprise to the people of Canada? I suppose not. It may be a surprise for the Hon. Member for Trinity, for the Liberals and for the NDP because they are disappointed.

I would like to say to the Hon. Member for Trinity that I am very, very disappointed in the speech she made today. I personally felt a little hurt. I have heard the Hon. Member for Trinity speak on numerous occasions. She is obviously a very credible Member of the House, but today she was reading someone else's speech. I do not understand. I am sure the Hon. Member will want to take this opportunity to rise in her place and try to redeem herself a little, just a bit. In that way, before we leave this House today, we will have a little hope in our hearts that she is not completely lost among the group who jump on tables, yell things, and who are just very depressing over all.

● (1450)

The Hon. Member commented about inquiries and the fact that this Government paid some legal fees. I hope she will admit, in the spirit of justice and equity, and notwithstanding the stories, that her Government also did that when it ordered inquiries. Her Government paid fees for Liberal Ministers. I think she will admit that.

The other thing she could do to redeem herself a little and try and preserve some credibility, as well as helping us maintain the hope that she will remain a very respectable Member in our hearts, is to acknowledge that unemployment has gone down and that Canada generally is better off today under this Government than it was under a Liberal Government.

Miss Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Minister's figures and mine is that the Minister makes a comparison between figures from September 1984 and today. I am making the comparison between 1982, at the depth of the recession, and today when we are four years into recovery. Unfortunately the Government has frittered away much of the advantage it had because it came in at a point when recovery was under way. I believe the figures I gave are correct. In Prince Edward Island in 1982, at the depth of a particularly cruel world-wide recession, unemployment was 12.9 per cent. It is now 14.6 per cent. In Nova Scotia the 1982

figure was 13.2 per cent and today, four years into the recovery, it is 14.3 per cent. In Alberta it was 7.7 per cent in 1982 and it is 10.8 per cent today. In British Columbia it was 12.1 per cent in 1982 and 13.6 per cent today. The figures stand. After four years of recovery the result is poor.

The Minister talked about other Governments paying legal fees for Ministers. That may very well be so, but I know of no case in the 12 years I have been in this House where a Minister accused of a conflict of interest asked for and got a judicial inquiry paid by the Crown, rather than taking his chances with the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure. There may have been such a case but I do not remember it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have a number of questioners. I will recognize the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Lewis), the Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate (Mr. Baker) and then the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon). I believe that will be just about it.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, my question will be very brief. It is my understanding that the Province of Ontario under a Liberal Government paid the legal fees of the Hon. Elinor Caplan, Treasurer of Ontario, when there was a conflict of interest inquiry concerning her. Would she care to compare the two situations?

Miss Nicholson (Trinity): I do not know what the arrangements were but, naturally, if the Parliamentary Secretary tells me that is the case I accept his word.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I have to congratulate the Hon. Member for the very fine speech she delivered. I do not know if she is going to be able to answer my questions, but perhaps she could inform the House and the Canadian people whether she is investigating the matter.

Under this Budget the Government of Canada is now going to tax potato chips. I think everyone is wondering whether there are any exemptions. Are barbeque, salt and vinegar or sour cream chips exempt? The Government is also going to tax corn and cheese based puffs. Does the Hon. Member know if that will include Cheezies? There is quite a difference between the puffs and the Cheezies, you see. The Government is also going to tax brittle pretzels under this Budget. What about the soggy ones? It is going to tax salted nuts for the first time. What about unsalted nuts? It is going to tax popcorn. Well, what about corn that is not popped? It says granola bars and frozen snacks packaged in single servings are going to be taxed. To my knowledge granola bars come in a large container in grocery stores, not by the single serving. The same thing applies to frozen snacks in grocery stores. The Budget says that popsicles and ice-cream bars are going to be taxed as well. Does that include polar bars and fudgesicles?

Mr. Holtmann: That is a difficult question.