

The Budget—Mr. Blenkarn

Given certain statements that the Member is quoted as having made in the past, does he feel that that is all right? We have places like Hawkesbury in my riding with 13 per cent unemployment, Pembroke with unemployment rates again in the teens, Cornwall and other communities in Eastern Ontario outside of the City of Ottawa also with high unemployment rates. They have no regional development programs and are not in a position to attract industries as other areas can which receive development programs.

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I do not know the detail of the programs in Eastern Ontario, but I do know what the Blue Book says. It gives more money for that type of program this year than last year. I say to the Member that he should read the Blue Book. It is a great bible and a marvellous thing. It sets everything out. There are even baby blues that set things out in even more detail. Whether there should be a separate program for Eastern Ontario, that is the first time I have ever heard of that.

Mr. McCurdy: It was not in the Blue Book.

Mr. Blenkarn: I did have a good look at the other programs and I find they are enhanced.

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, I will try to be as brief as possible. We said, during the election campaign, that if this Government were to be re-elected and given its commitment to the Free Trade Agreement, it would not be long until the Government started breaking down the social fabric of this country by going after social programs.

We have seen that in the Budget. The one thing that I want to point out is the so-called claw-back as it applies to family allowance and old age pensions. I think it sets a terribly dangerous precedent because if this Government can get away with clawing back family allowances, if this Government can be successful in clawing back old age pensions, where does it stop? Where does this stop?

Does the Member not realize that if the claw back begins at \$70,000 today, it can be \$60,000 tomorrow and \$50,000 after that. Not only that, the Government can then strike medicare. It is an unbelievable precedent that the Tories have started. It is the end of social programs, the end of a solid Canadian tradition.

• (1720)

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the breaking point is. However, if the Hon. Member will take a look at his income tax form he will see that if he received too much income in a year and received unemployment insurance, he will have to start paying back some of that unemployment insurance. This is not a new program. There has been such a provision in the Income Tax Act for some considerable period of time. The Hon. Member may want to take a look at that.

He asks where does it stop. I will tell him where it stops. It stops when people will no longer lend money at an affordable rate. It stops when we cannot collect enough in taxes to pay our bills as they come due. It stops when there is not a sound economy and we are forced to the printing press. It stops when the country becomes financially bankrupt. Unless we are very careful, unless we pay attention to what we have here, and unless we support the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), that will be the future. That is where it stops.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, we have had raised a cloud of gobbledygook which is supposed to be substantiated by references to the Blue Book. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I do not have time to deal with all the purported arguments of the hon. gentleman.

Surely you must have been tremendously impressed, Mr. Speaker, with his metaphor about VIA canoes and the demands of those on this side, had we lived then, for their subsidization. The fact is that the Hon. Member completely failed to understand that what the Government has been doing is indeed to subsidize VIA canoes instead of to build the steamship. Perhaps it was a mistake, a beclouding of the Hon. Member's mind with his own gobbledygook, that he would argue that air transportation in Canada is more efficient, more convenient, indeed safer, and that we should not look to Europe or Japan and build a new kind of railway that would keep people on the ground and get them from point A to point B quickly and environmentally more safely, more efficiently and perhaps more economically.

Does the Hon. Member understand what has happened? Does he understand that the Government has destroyed the chance of having ground transportation which is rapid and efficient as well as economically and environmentally sound? Or could he not find it in the Blue Book?