

*The Budget*

What will this mean for a one-earner couple earning \$15,000 a year with two children, in other words, the poorest amongst us? Four people in one house, one unit, one apartment, one building with an income of \$15,000 a year are going to have a great big tax cut. The government has outlined it for us. It works out to be \$2. They are going to get a \$2 tax cut this year. A family of four with an income of \$20,000 is going to have a tax cut of—get ready, get a grip on yourself, turn up the pacemaker—\$6. By the way that is \$2 a year, \$6 a year, not a day, not a month, not a week, but a year. A family of four with an income of \$30,000, it gets more generous as we go on, is going to have a tax cut of \$15. If you have a family income of \$40,000 you will get a tax cut of \$27, but if you get all the way up to \$100,000 you get a tax cut of \$111.

You would have to be the world's greatest used car salesman, and I say that with all respect to used car salesmen, to stand up and suggest that this so-called tax cut of \$2 a year, \$6 a year, \$15 a year, or \$27 a year is going to stimulate the economy?

If this budget was a used car it would have no wheels.

The Government of Canada cannot be serious when it suggests that it is trying to reach down to assist those greatest in need and to give an economic shot in the arm to the economy of this country. It cannot be serious when it says that it wants to demonstrate some compassion on the one hand and on the other hand get this economy going again.

**Mr. Benjamin:** No, they really believe that stuff.

**Mr. Tobin:** My friend from the New Democratic Party from the riding of Regina—Lumsden, a great member of Parliament who is leaving—it will be very hard to fill his shoes but we will find a good Liberal to do it—says that the government really believes this stuff. I am not as cruel as he. I do not believe that even the government believes its foolish claim to stimulate the economy with that stingy, miserly, miserable, ridiculous, insulting, cold, cruel, callous-hearted \$2 tax break. Not even the government believes its own rhetoric when it tells us it is going to stimulate the economy with that. The government also claims that it is providing some minor tax cuts. Even my friend, the member for Mississauga South, would admit they are minor. The member would admit with his great expertise that they are minor, that they are going to really instil a new degree of confidence in the

business community. The reality is that the collection of minor measures, designed to give some kind of break to business, to engender a degree of confidence in the business community, are dramatically offset every time the interest rate rises. When real interest rates in Canada are posted alongside U.S. rates they are dramatically higher in this country than is the case south of the border.

Those so-called minor concessions are more than wiped out when we see, as we did today, the value of the Canadian dollar going up. We are an exporting nation. Whether we are exporting fish, mineral products, forestry products or manufactured products, this is an exporting nation. It is one of the largest exporting nations in the world. It is one of the nations of the western world, the G-7 group, most dependent upon exports for its financial health. When our dollar goes up, our ability to compete as an exporting nation declines.

The government pursues blindly its policy of high real interest rates and a high dollar. Canadians are being led to believe that interest rates have dramatically fallen. We acknowledge that and we applaud that. The cost of doing business in Canada compared to the cost of doing business south of the border is still dramatically higher. My friend from Mississauga South would acknowledge that because we cannot argue with the numbers.

There is nothing here that is going to dramatically improve the confidence level in the Canadian business community. What do we have? We had a Minister of Finance who declined to wear new shoes the day he delivered the budget. The reason he did not wear new shoes is because he did not deliver a new budget. This budget is a retread of the last four or five budgets presented by the previous Minister of Finance. It is the same old policy from the same old government that got us into the mess we are in in the first place.

Canadians wanted change, constructive change. They wanted proactive government, a government determined to get this country working again. Against that test, this budget has failed this country. This budget has not contributed to a healthier economy. It has not contributed to a healthier political climate. It has not contributed to national unity. It has not contributed a single thing to those people who most need at this time in our history the chance to go back to work, the dignity of a pay cheque and some restored confidence in the fundamental health and strength of this country.