

The Budget—Mr. Hopkins

● (1700)

In case people do not want to believe newspapers, let me read some history that has been written about the Government. It is from an excellent book entitled "Canada and Collective Security: Odd Man Out". It is written by Joseph T. Jockel and Joel J. Sokolsky. Mr. Sokolsky was one of the researchers and advisers a year ago when the then Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence was preparing its study on NORAD. He is an excellent student. This work was published with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University, and is extremely credible.

On page 11 of the book, Mr. Jockel and Mr. Sokolsky say regarding the campaign of 1984:

—the Conservative spokesperson on defence issues, Harvie Andre, a Member of Parliament from Calgary, called for the party to commit itself to real increases in the defence budget on the order of 6 per cent a year for five years—

Not one, but five years:

—thus doubling the rate of increase of the past several years.

One can only imagine what the increase will be in the next two years when we consider that in the first three years there has been a real increase of less than 2.75 per cent in total. The Government will have quite a challenge in meeting that budget, and the reality is that it cannot do so. I simply want to put to rest all the rhetoric about what the Government is doing for national defence in this country.

The House will note that the Liberal Party that was defeated in 1984 not only met the NATO commitment of 3 per cent every year until it left office as well as in the fiscal Budget for which it was responsible after it left office, but in two of those years it more than met the Conservative promise, and almost met that promise in the third year because the increase was 5.3 per cent.

Let us consider what the Government has done for our Canadian Armed Forces and people in the private sector in terms of pension income and severance pay. The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) recently made a statement in the House simply because of the tremendous pressure that has been brought to bear on him by the Liberal Opposition, as well as Armed Forces organizations, pension organizations, the RCMP, public servants, Crown corporation retirees and others.

In 1985, the Government began a procedure whereby it announced that pension income and severance pay would be considered as income for the purpose of paying unemployment insurance. It did not matter whether members of the RCMP or the Armed Forces had paid from its inception in 1970 until they retired in 1985. They suddenly discovered that they were unable to collect unemployment insurance. In some cases some got as much as \$5 a week and others had their premium payments cut simply because the Government had brought in a policy which considered their pension income and severance pay as income. When we questioned the Hon. Member for

Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald), who is now in another portfolio, she rose in the House to defend it with great fervour, saying that it was a tremendous policy. The former Minister of Employment and Immigration was shifted to what is supposed to be a quieter Department but one that I suspect will become more controversial soon.

The new Minister was appointed and realized something had to change. The other day he rose in the House to withdraw some of these measures. We must recognize the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grace—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand) who rose in the House on March 18 to say, as reported at page 4306 of *Hansard*:

After a year and a half of questions in this House, demonstrations outside the House, Opposition Days, Statements Pursuant to Standing Order 21, and visits to the Minister's office, in short, an onslaught of attack on the Government, it has finally seen the light. The Minister has been dragged kicking and screaming to recognize that the policy which his predecessor introduced a year and a half ago is wrong with regard to those who applied for unemployment insurance after being preretired before January 5, 1986.

He went on to give credit to all those groups who fought that battle. The Government has been insensitive to those pensioners, the retirees of the Canadian Armed Forces, RCMP retirees and others, for the duties they have performed. The Government is nickel and diming them when they retire and when they need the money the most in order to prepare for a new way of life.

I only wish that I had enough time today to tell the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Oberle) exactly what I think of his policies and the Government's policy on transferring first-class technology.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member's time has expired. I am sure the House would not mind giving the Hon. Member an extra minute to conclude his speech.

Mr. Hopkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I simply want to say that it is a sad day for Canada when the Government closes down a \$50 million telescope and observatory situated in the quiet land of eastern Ontario. The Government does not know how to mothball it because no country has ever had the audacity to mothball a telescope. People will have to remain there to look after it or it will be destroyed in many ways.

The worst insult to the science community of Canada was the Government's announcement that it will buy a 25 per cent share in a foreign telescope situated on a mountain peak in Hawaii, where Canadian scientists will have to travel to do the same things they would have done here on our own doorstep if the Government had spent a few million dollars to upgrade the telescope and observatory. Indeed, such upgrading was planned through Treasury Board but was cancelled. Now our scientists are being sent offshore while these excellent facilities in our own country, which could have attracted many international scientists, are being destroyed. I thank the House for its consideration in extending my time.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I heard the Hon. Member indicate that it was a sad day for Canada when we could not