

The Budget—Mr. Volpe

economy? Why didn't they concentrate their efforts on the quality of this economy and what is necessary to make it a success over the next five or ten years?

With this Budget, the Minister should strive to provide the economy with flexibility and diversification, unless it can increase the wealth of this country to improve the welfare of all Canadians men and women by progressing on several fronts at the same time.

[English]

Yet over the next five years the 10 occupations expected to contribute the highest number of new jobs are in the medium to low-skilled positions where the remuneration is below the weekly average. I ask government Members this: Whose kids are being targeted for those jobs? Whose children are being slotted for such a future?

The Minister of Finance bold-facedly says that this Budget aims to increase the level of unemployment, a level already on the upswing in seven out of ten provinces. Canadians must surely find it hard to appreciate knowing, as they do, that approximately 60 per cent of that unemployment currently represents and is attributable to job mismatching.

Approximately 600,000 job vacancies go begging. That figure represents the highest percentage, the highest total, since 1966. Some 300 categories of skilled jobs are not being filled, and in many areas the situation is not improving. In fact, it is getting worse.

As an example, the average age of tradesmen in the construction industry, which is so vital to the growth of many of our big metropolises, such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, is 55. Worse, Canada's illiteracy, as we have seen evidenced by one in six adult Canadians, costs businesses some \$4 billion annually, and society as a whole a total of \$10 billion.

The results for Canadian productivity are as obvious as they are harsh. Anticipated growth in productivity of a paltry .7 per cent over the next four years is predicted when a competitive position in the global economy requires 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent growth.

• (1640)

Canadians will be forgiven for their skepticism and their cynicism when Tory propaganda, which my hon. colleague to the left has indicated is costing Canadians

\$2.7 million, aims to convince Canadians and all of us in this Chamber that their Government is in a bind and must tax its way out. The past four "fat cat" Tory Budgets declined to meet the minimum standards of sound economic management.

The sins of omission read like a litany of betrayals for Canadians: No comprehensive job training, no national educational strategy; decreased support for R and D; insufficient support for export-based manufacturing industries; deregulatory policies that favour monopolies to the detriment of competitiveness; disproportionately heavy taxation of the two groups with the greatest input in the economy—and I refer to those two income groups at the lower and middle spectrum—the abandonment of any industrial strategy that might have increased the softer lines of all-Canadians, widened the tax base and reduced dependence on Government programs.

Where budgets in the past have buttressed the infrastructure of our society, provided impetus to growth and instilled confidence at home and abroad, this Budget perpetuates that sense of drift now so characteristic of Tory governments. The errors of omission are compounded by a perversity of commission in this Budget. The Minister has set in motion the dismantling of the infrastructure that binds this country and gives it that chance of survival in the face of continental pressure.

We see that the private sector will soon rule over Air Canada and the Post Office. Gone will be VIA Rail and an equitable employment insurance system as the Government withdraws from the economy.

Moreover, this Finance Minister (Mr. Wilson) refuses to recognize the damage that he is inflicting globally. His Government has gone back on defence and aid commitments, actions so symptomatic of its cynical domestic deceptions. With cut-backs to the ODA, the Minister has compromised our national word of honour. As a result, he has undermined our international moral authority, diminished our image as an honest broker, weakened our export markets and generally convinced our allies and friends abroad that we are no longer reliable.

The rest of the world is quickly learning what Canadians now take as a given: That the Tories cannot locate the word "integrity" in any dictionary.

An Hon. Member: That is right.