

The Budget

workers and Canadian business by not matching our commitment to freer markets with effective adjustment assistance”.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I am glad to see him acknowledging that the government is moving in the right direction although he chides the government that it has not done enough.

However, in making his assumptions about what the government is doing or not doing in the amount of room that it has to manoeuvre, it is interesting to note that an article in this morning's *Gazette* entitled: "Economists Disagree Over Ottawa's Budget Forecast" states: "In contrast the C.D. Howe Institute said the budget is framed in a credible, economic forecast which leaves more room for pleasant than unpleasant surprises". Toward the end of the article it also talks about a survey of 20 analysts last week by MMS International that found that most are more optimistic than the Minister of Finance.

I want to ask the hon. member opposite: Would he not rather the government move in the right direction and not move too far so as to upset the apple cart, but to keep the things if we have a fragile recovery which is going on—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret but the time has expired for questions and comments. You will have to ask him behind the curtain.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity to contribute a few words to this debate.

I want to congratulate my colleague and good friend, the Minister of Finance, for an excellent budget. He promised a realistic budget and he delivered on that.

For our colleagues who have served as long as you and I have in this House this budget is no doubt a bit of a novelty in the sense that it has a tax cut. I would be hard pressed really to remember when there ever was a tax cut in any of the budgets that various Ministers of

Finance have laid before the House which is always a big occasion here.

This budget is not just important for what it contains. It is more important for the message that it attempts and perhaps successfully conveys, the message to investors, the message to business, and the message to consumers.

The message is that the government intends to stay the course. It is going to continue to restrain government spending. It is going to continue to cut and reallocate expenditures. The budget also demonstrates that the government has listened not only to the voices that we hear every day, the shrill voices, but also the voices of ordinary Canadians.

I just dug into my own mailbag. I know all of us have our own files for people who make comments on certain aspects of our work. I will just remind you of a few things here.

I had an ongoing dialogue with Mr. Taylor, an accountant, all the way from Tumbler Ridge in my riding and Don Thompson from Fort Nelson. He constantly points out to me some of the inequities in our family law and how married couples, in particular, are treated with respect to income tax. There is obviously some satisfaction in that the budget has responded to that.

Ms. Birchall from Dawson Creek, B.C. writes to me and complains about public service wages and points out, as does Mr. Fuhr from Fort St. John, that perhaps members of Parliament and ministers should take a lead here. So there is some comfort in the budget.

Perhaps the only bad point in the budget is that my salary has been decreased by 5 per cent, but what a small sacrifice to make in an effort to restore the kind of confidence that is necessary among the public if we are to succeed.

Mr. Haagsman of Hudson's Hope, British Columbia places a high priority on the need for government to control spending. Mr. Don Clapper of Prince George talks about the high interest rates. It goes on and on and on. All of us have these files. It is important to send a signal, to tell people that they have helped to write the budget and the government has listened.