

Government Orders

few months at a job provided by the infrastructure program? Is this the best you have to offer your son, sir? Mr. Speaker, through you, I am talking to the member and I think I am getting him upset.

• (1835)

Well, this government, which has no vision, has decided to consult the people instead of making decisions. Consultations like people in bars would have held. You only have to listen to open-line shows to know that people are fed up, that they want decisions, cuts, changes and a fairer tax system.

Why not do something about family trusts? About tax havens? Because the people who benefit from them are the same people who finance your party. Now that you are in office, you do exactly what the Conservatives did. It is your turn to enjoy pork-barrelling. Instead of saying "We will not do as the Conservatives did", as you promised to do while in opposition, you have not changed a thing. You come up with the same kind of budget, the same kind of statements. You brag about decreasing the unemployment rate, when you had nothing to do with it. You brag about creating jobs, even though not one program has been set up since you came to office, and no economic direction has been given. You are behaving exactly like the Conservatives did in 1984.

You had five months to answer my questions, dear colleague. Five months to let me know of your government's intentions through statements by ministers and a budget that holds up. But no, we got nothing at all.

I would be pleased if the hon. member could give me an answer, albeit a short one. You have already talked too much, that is why I did not leave you much time to reply. I would like the hon. member to tell me how he can be proud of what his government has done, since the unemployed have seen their benefits reduced, as of April 1, and have lost \$1 billion—

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if that was a question or a litany. I thought it would never end.

The hon. member asks us why we are in favour of consultations with regard to family trusts. Does he not remember that it was his own colleague, the opposition finance critic, who called for consultations? You see, we are so receptive that we are even willing to take advice— not too often, of course—from a member opposite.

The hon. member questions us about the budget, claiming that the general public does not like it. I will read you a quote: "The federal Finance Minister's first budget is modest but true to what the Liberal Party told Canadians during the last election campaign. It will not please those who, like the Reform Party, want to slash spending across the board. But, for once, it spares

the vast majority of taxpayers who already shoulder a heavy burden." That quote is from *Le Devoir*.

Would you like to hear another one, Mr. Speaker? Here is what the *Vancouver Sun* had to say: "Mr. Martin kept his word. He gave us a combination of tax increases and spending cuts that will reduce the deficit a little without compromising a fragile recovery." Canadians across the country are saying unanimously that it is a good budget.

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express to this House my support for the amendment moved on March 25 by my colleague, the hon. member for Mercier, respecting Bill C-17, an Act to amend certain statutes to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 22, 1994.

• (1840)

How can we endorse these amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act? How could we support this government, even for one minute? Do you think we were elected to help the government swap its promise of jobs, jobs, jobs for bang, bang, bang? That is the sound of unemployment insurance reform crashing down on the heads of the unemployed if we allow the government to come down hard on them, because that is what it intends to do, Mr. Speaker.

In moving her amendment, my colleague gave two reasons why this House should refuse to proceed with the second reading of this bill. I fully agree with them. How will the proposed amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act redress the imbalance between have and have-not regions? Where are the measures to reduce youth unemployment? How does the government explain its pursuit of a conservative policy and the finance minister's refusal to cancel this year's increase in unemployment insurance premiums?

These are all questions that I have been hearing from my constituents and that are being asked across Canada. Is the government deaf? I hope that it is not and that it will take these concerns into account. The people deserve more than recycled conservative policy.

There is nothing in this bill that leads us to expect that the inequities between the provinces will be eliminated. Who will be affected by the amendments to the unemployment insurance system? Quebec and the Maritimes. Increasing the number of weeks needed to qualify for benefits affects mainly the Maritime provinces and Quebec. In the regions hardest hit by unemployment, people will have to work two weeks more to obtain benefits, that is in regions where unemployment is over 16 per cent.

Let us suppose, an unpleasant hypothesis, that this measure had applied in the past few months. Seven of thirteen regions would have been affected in the Maritimes and six out of thirteen in Quebec. In real terms, we are talking about 277,000