

*Supply*

• (1600)

This government has to give Canadians hope. Wednesday's statement did little to do that. Contrary to what the government thinks, Canadians can be the engine of economic growth. If we want Canadians to start spending again, if we want the private sector to be ready for the challenges of globalization, we have to show them that the government is willing to invest in Canadians and to take this initiative.

We need to kick-start the economy. It is only common sense that we need to get the economy rolling again. This government's paltry commitment to that of some \$500 million just does not wash.

One approach to get the economy working again is to implement a comprehensive infrastructure program. We on this side of the House have been calling for this for some time now. Unfortunately the government's proposals in its recent economic statements really are inadequate. Hundreds of towns and cities across this country have infrastructure projects ready to go. The amount of \$500 million promised in last Wednesday's mini budget only amounts to about one-quarter of the \$2.4 billion taken away from the unemployed in the economic statement. That supposedly will create some 5,000 jobs. With 480,000 young people out of work, big deal.

Recently the Canadian Federation of Municipalities estimated that at least \$20 billion must be spent to maintain our existing bridges, highways and sewage treatment plants. Obviously \$500 million is not going to go a long way.

To conclude I would like to offer some advice to this government. Fiscal responsibility means more than cutting and slashing. It means more than just the bottom line. In fact this country has had enough pain from this government.

I believe the economic crisis we face today necessitates the government take proactive measures on the economy. I also believe there is a difference between spending and investing. Let us invest in Canadians. This short-term measure can be done discriminately and responsibly by ensuring that every line item of spending is scrutinized.

This government has to concede that its economic policy has not worked and that a new action plan is needed. To provide leadership a government must be

willing to do what is best for the people it purports to serve. It cannot be constrained by what it says is its ideology and in this case tired economic theory. We have to get things back on track and we have to get Canadians working again.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the very thoughtful remarks of my distinguished colleague from the riding of Haldimand—Norfolk. In particular, today he was asking a question of the government on the important issue of unemployment among Canadian youth.

I want to ask my colleague two questions. First, we are living in very difficult economic times for our youth. He has mentioned, very eloquently of course, what the government has failed to do to assist our youth. But another thought comes to mind, the present policies of the Ontario NDP that have increased tuition fees for our youth in our universities and have at the same time cut back on student loans. This is from a party that had promised to abolish tuition fees, if we can believe it.

I want to ask my colleague which he thinks is the worse: this federal Conservative government or the provincial NDP.

**Mr. Speller:** Mr. Speaker, that has to be one of the toughest questions I have had to answer in the House.

Granted, the country is going through a recession. We have admitted that. We have also admitted that the recession is world-wide. However, there are specific ideas and specific proposals put out by us and by different student groups and groups of unemployed that suggest certain ways in which the hardship of our economic times can be alleviated in certain sectors.

Obviously the provincial NDP has moved in certain areas. I will give it credit for some of the areas it has moved in. It has invested some money in infrastructure in order to put some people back to work immediately. Unfortunately it has failed in the over-all picture of dealing with the problems of university students, students who have no jobs and must spend time in university until there is an opportunity out there for them.

I will give credit to this government in certain areas. Under the youth portfolio it has good programs to keep people in school. I think that is great and we need to invest in that area. I am glad the government has looked at the longer term picture.