

The Budget—Mr. A. Lambert

In the higher quarters of power, for the first time they lend an ear to the explanations of radical economists. The Keynesians have been wrong, the Friedman monetarists have gone astray, Mr. Nixon is clear-headed enough to realize. The rules of liberalism have been violated, one after the other.

That was happening in the United States, our neighbour. We get more or less the same effects, since the causes are much alike.

Mr. Speaker, like in the United States, the government is advising us about large cuts in public expenditures by reducing the credits of some departments such as Transport, Public Works, Environment and Secretary of State as well as those of certain Crown corporations. With respect to Crown corporations, I agree, but when it comes to the departments of Transport, Public Works and Environment, I feel there is still too much to do and we should realize that those departments have larger needs. This would also allow for creating jobs. There will be even fewer jobs in the public service. The government on the other hand wants the private sector to increase employment. This is the opposite from the public service, excepting the Auditor General's staff. The latter will be increased to do a better job in the area of the government's financial operations.

Let us hope that to a larger degree, the government will in the future implement the auditor's recommendations to prevent wasting public money. I regret that the least paid of public servants will be refused any pay raise. I therefore urge the minister to change that policy not to penalize that group, which must in certain cases hold two jobs to make both ends meet.

As for reducing expenditures in health and hospital insurance, I am in total agreement. Because since these programs became government operated, costs have been soaring the people wonder what is happening in these areas, with services no better than before. I hope the Minister of National Health will get satisfactory results from his talks with his provincial counterparts on these questions, and that he will inform the House without delay.

The Minister of Finance stated that amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act will be introduced. I hope these changes will not penalize workers that are temporarily unemployed without any fault on their part. I favour work incentives. I feel that in order to achieve that goal as soon as possible, so that the majority of people capable of working have a job and become productive, we urgently need legislation guaranteeing minimum income and allowing workers at the same time to have a productive job. I think it would be a good way of encouraging people to work. I am surprised that nearly \$4 billion will be distributed in unemployment insurance benefits during 1975-76 and that the government intends to assign only \$345 million over two years to Local Initiatives Program and students' employment.

Once again I suggest that greater credits be earmarked for the Local Initiatives Program to enable municipalities to carry out public works in their respective areas. With the money thus spent, jobs could be created, and the whole community would benefit from the public services thus realized. Instead of paying people for doing nothing, I think it would be wiser to pay them for producing things

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

useful to the population. We worry about the declining gross national product, and quite rightly so. And this will continue if the state does not take the necessary steps to get more people to work. I am sure the great majority of the population wish to work. We must therefore do the impossible to make that wish come true. I am satisfied with the measures concerning housing. Both the doubling of the grant and the reduction of the tax on insulating materials are likely to stimulate construction, provided those who want to build a house can have the initial capital. It will certainly be difficult for the unemployed or the one on social welfare to take advantage of those measures.

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On the other hand, I regret that no item is provided to help people from 55 to 64 who are unemployed or unable to work and who have no income. In my opinion, these people are going through life's most difficult period and the state should help them by passing legislation especially for them.

Mr. Speaker, I disagree completely with the Minister of Finance as concerns the new tax on petroleum products and gasoline. This will contribute to inflation and cause special hardship to the small taxpayers who already have insufficient purchasing power. I also believe that the government has been overly generous towards the large oil companies which make enormous profits every year. In other words, the individual taxpayers will pay for the research carried out by these companies for the development of our natural resources from which they will eventually benefit.

I have the strong impression that this budget favours the large concerns at the expense of the small wage-earners and that inflation will continue its work of destruction. All Canadians, and especially those who are less well-off, are now suffering from what we resoundingly call inflation. For the ordinary citizen, this catastrophe is called price increases. There has never been such a dramatic situation in Canada since the big economic crisis of the 1930's. The dollar is not worth half of what it was worth only 20 years ago. Essential commodities are selling at incredible prices compared to what they cost a few years ago.

We are living in a critical period. We are on the verge of a depression which could reach catastrophic proportions and endanger the stability of our society. Faced with this imminent threat, the ministers are paralyzed, do not know what to do, do not understand the real causes of inflation and do not seem concerned about its inevitable consequences.

The Social Crediters propose specific solutions to ward off the disastrous effects of price increases. These solutions may be our only hope to avoid a spectacular bankruptcy of our society and economy. Inflation is simply a consequence of a deficient financial and economic system. Only a comprehensive reform of this system can correct the economic ills of today. If the present depression continues, everyone will feel its effects because such a situation could see the very basis our society destroyed by those who will suffer from it. The future of our country depends to a great extent on our success in this gigantic