

The Budget—Mr. Danson

In addition,—and this is in the provincial field largely, but in the post-secondary school field it is certainly largely federal initiative—we have developed an education network. Perhaps there are several levels of government, but there is only one level of taxpayers. The schools we have now which we did not have ten or 15 years ago are quite incredible. I will not deal with the quality of education or the nature of it at this time, but the physical infrastructure is there. In addition, community colleges have been established. The CEGEPs in Quebec have given another dimension and another opportunity for our young people to obtain relevant educations. Rather than having Ph.D.s driving taxicabs, people can now learn skilled trades and become semi-professionals. Those people are extremely valuable.

There are community centres across the country which were started largely under our winter works programs. There is a quality of life in our large and small communities across the country. I know that every principal community in my constituency has an arena, a community centre, which got off the ground because of federal funds. Those are the social assets we have which we do not want to underrate. They are much better than they are in almost any other country in the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: In the society we are developing, young people are growing up today, swelling our labour force and causing us temporary problems, even though we are creating more jobs than at any time in history. We are creating jobs at a rate higher than the rate in any other industrialized nation. Because of the baby boom—and we love them—people are having difficulty adjusting, but they are adjusting, and adjusting well. In my experience, both in my portfolio and in other work through the Katimavik program, I have seen young men and women who want challenge which is relevant to them. They are prepared to dig in and work hard. They are not much concerned about economic return. I do not mean they are unconcerned, but that is secondary to being busy and doing something relevant, to them. That is happening at this time.

I mentioned the industrial capacity which is developing and the innovation which is developing. In my department there are tremendous programs going. We are now spending more on capital equipment for defence than at any time previously in our history. We have the largest peace-time programs which have ever been engaged in by a federal government.

We are spending over \$1 billion on long-range patrol aircraft, about a quarter of a billion dollars on armoured personnel carriers which are being built totally in London, Ontario, almost \$200 million on Leopard tanks, about \$2.3 billion on the new fighter aircraft which we are assessing at the present time and \$1.6 billion for the first six ships under our new ship program. These are tremendous expenditures, but I think what Canadians realize all too little is that while we buy some of this equipment abroad, we also sell a great deal abroad. We are not in the business of producing heavy armaments, but we are involved in more sophisticated and important technology which we sell to other countries.

[Mr. Danson.]

We buy from other countries, and other countries buy from us under defence-sharing agreements. I do not have precise figures with me, but we are very much in balance. Amounts vary from month to month and year to year. Sometimes we are ahead, and sometimes we are behind, but we drive very hard bargains.

I am more interested in the qualitative aspects of industrial benefits than I am in quantity. We are hopefully going to buy 150 aircraft. If one Canadian company turns out 150 sets of wings, when the contract ends, the plant closes down, its workers are out of work, and a community is perhaps decimated. I do not say we do not want that type of business, but we should either have it for the whole series of that aircraft or have something which we do better than anyone else, and competitively, rather than things for which we perhaps have to pay a premium, although premiums are sometimes well worth paying. Things we do which spin off far beyond our defence capability have a structural effect in our economy. That is why these billions of dollars which I am responsible for spending will be used strategically as leverage to get the type of industry which spins off in other than defence fields as well as defence fields.

The difficulty with defence-dependent industry is that defence expenditures rise and fall, and those industries rise and fall with them. That also often prevents the Minister of National Defence from making the best military decisions. Sometimes he has to make a decision to keep a plant going rather than to buy the best equipment. That has happened in our history before. The opportunities for innovation and for development which come from these programs are great indeed. This is enhanced by our competitive dollar, the opportunity dollar which we have now.

I think the level of our dollar is a real reflection of its value. I sometimes wish it was not called the dollar. I wish it was called a beaver or a maple leaf or something like that because it has a value, and we cannot pretend it does not. It reflects, primarily, our productive worth. Sometimes we price ourselves out of certain markets for various reasons. The present level of the dollar will price us back into certain markets, where we belong. Where should it settle? That does not really matter. I am not an economist. I think it should settle where it should settle, and intervention should take place only to keep an orderly market and to keep psychological considerations from impinging on our dollar. The lower level of our dollar creates job opportunities and encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness.

There are many other government support programs like the enterprise development programs, the Federal Business Development Bank, and the research and development incentives the Minister of Finance just introduced. There is the Export Development Corporation. All these programs back up the businessman and the entrepreneur who will create jobs in this country for those young people who want to get started.

Instead of the soul destroying gloom and doom we get from hon. members opposite, and the constant carping which makes Canadians lose confidence in themselves and which makes