

*Excise Tax Act*

Someone might be working for 20 hours a week at one of the local shops earning the minimum wage and bringing in an income that could only be described as totally inadequate, inappropriate, and unacceptable.

When the unemployment figures came out at 28 per cent there was some shock in the communities. Some informal, some casual, and some very sophisticated surveys were conducted which confirmed the results, that indeed the unemployment levels in regions of the Province of British Columbia are in fact 27 per cent unemployed, and that says nothing about all those people who are underemployed.

Under the Statistics Canada review if a person receives a phone call to work for one day in a previous month, that person is considered in that month to be fully employed. Even when one says that the unemployment level is 27 per cent, that says nothing of the underemployed people who ought to be working full time, but who are working for a few hours a week at a very low wage. The situation is indeed extremely serious.

As we see it in western Canada, one of the problems is that we do not get our fair share of support from the federal Government. In spite of a number of government Members, both in Cabinet and in the Government, when one looks at regional development programs, and I have the results in front of me for 1986 and 1987, looking at all of the support from the federal Government through business initiatives, British Columbia received less than 9 per cent of the total. It has much more than that in terms of population. If there is a case to be made for a special economic affirmative action program, it could probably be made without hesitation for a province like British Columbia. It probably ought to get more than its traditional fair share. When it comes to the over-all support for enterprises in British Columbia, we fall short. It receives less than 9 per cent of the total for all of Canada.

In looking at government procurement programs where the federal Government purchases goods and supplies from companies across Canada, the amount that comes from British Columbia is abysmally low. It represents a few percentage points of the total. The federal Government should be taking much more aggressive action in buying more goods and more of its services from suppliers, not only in western Canada but specifically from British Columbia.

When one looks at CIDA contracts for services or goods, again British Columbia is almost at the bottom of the pile in terms of getting its fair share. When one looks at supplies and service contracts that the agency takes out, untendered and tendered, British Columbia is abysmally low. It is almost not even in the picture when it comes to supply and services.

I have a long list here. Challenge '88, the program that supports young people attempting to raise money for their education, has not had an increase in funding for two years. Taking into account a factor for inflation, that means there has been approximately a 10 per cent decrease in funding for summer student programs.

This is felt most heartily and harshly in places like British Columbia where the private sector cannot be expected to provide summer jobs, such as can be expected in cities like Toronto where the economy is much more prosperous, where the economy is relatively booming and as a result the opportunity for young people to find summer employment is that much greater.

We are pleased about that situation in Ontario, or parts of Ontario, but with the sluggish economy in British Columbia, it is extremely difficult to find a summer job. If a student does find a summer job, it is inevitably at a modest wage which makes it very difficult for young people in British Columbia to access post-secondary education—because of this difficulty in raising funds through summer employment.

Does the Government provide additional assistance to help young people provide for their post-secondary education financing? No. The Government makes it more difficult. Last year it made it more difficult than the year before, and this year it will make it more difficult than ever.

Another major area where we have seen significant and very tragic cuts is in job training at colleges in British Columbia. The number of seats traditionally purchased by the federal Government to assist young people in upgrading their skills and in becoming prepared for the knowledge based economy of the future, are not being added to, they are not being maintained, they are being cut time and time again.

One has to wonder at the logic of this approach. In what other western industrialized nation would one find the federal Government cutting support to encourage young people? Not only young people, Mr. Speaker, but people generally need to be upgraded and retrained in terms of preparing themselves for the realities of a very competitive market. Although I have a long list, I will not go through the entire list. I wish to make the point that British Columbia is not getting its fair share.

As you will know, Mr. Speaker, Premier Vander Zalm of British Columbia has over the last number of years, come out with all sorts of pronouncements, some peculiar, some perhaps not so peculiar. I have only agreed with one, and that is his statement the other day that B.C. is not getting its fair share of federal government programming. British Columbia is one province that is getting the short end of the stick. I have to agree with him. The evidence certainly supports that.

One would have to look long and hard to find a single government program, and I have not found one yet, that indicates that British Columbia is even getting its fair share. We are not asking for more, although I think we could even make the case for more than our fair share, we are simply asking for our fair share along with the other provinces.

We are concerned when looking at various federal Government programs that almost inevitably the overwhelming lion's share goes to central Canada. That is fine in terms of supporting central Canada. But when more than a fair allotment goes to that same area, time and time again, those of us from the