

The Budget

nizes the vital role research and development plays in making Canadians competitive in a global economy?

I touched for a moment on the small measure that the government has offered. That is not a response. There is an essential need for Canadians, business and labour, to recognize the role of research and development.

What is there in this budget to ensure better understanding between business and labour by offering tax incentives so that business can share the ownership of the productive capacity of our country with employees? What is there to ensure that we channel our savings into productive investment in this country?

There is nothing in this budget to encourage the provinces to lower, reduce, or eliminate those internal barriers which trammel our effective competition abroad. This budget fails to take a long-term view or a short-term view of what has to be done to make Canada competitive. On those grounds, this budget fails.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member for Etobicoke North for whom I have a great deal of respect. I compliment him in part for his very reasoned critique of the budget.

I gather from what he has said there is more show than substance. He answered part of that in the rhetorical questions he said the budget did not cover.

But he did not seem to mention a word—and I am very interested in view of his experience in government and also in the financial community and the affairs of this country—in terms of broadening and maintaining or expanding our competitive advantage.

I totally agree with him in terms of this international task force on international competitiveness, which is a glorious waste of time and money. What part does he think the Economic Council of Canada plays in this? Is that what he would normally think is a healthy step to help build on our competitive advantage, or has the Economic Council of Canada outlived its usefulness?

Mr. MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to engage in however brief a discussion with my colleague

from Annapolis Valley—Hants, for whom I have real respect.

He of course touches on a central issue and that is the ability of the government as a whole, including of course the Economic Council and the Science Council, to identify and address those issues which can render Canada competitive in the world marketplace.

My own view, and I suspect he would share this, is that the government should not proceed to the abolition of the Economic Council of Canada and of the Science Council. It should enhance their ability to perform the functions originally envisaged for them.

Now, it may be that there would be an advantage in rolling together those two institutions. After all, science policy and economic policy, and indeed to a degree social policy, have become virtually indistinguishable.

If Canada is to be competitive, as he and I would both seek, in the global economy then it would seem to me to be incumbent upon the government to address the future role of those two councils in an imaginative and constructive way; not to abolish them, but rather to consider whether by relocating them, by restructuring them, or indeed merging them, they could play that arms-length role of advice to the government which could indeed benefit all Canadians.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member for Etobicoke North who, of course, is very concerned with the Canadian economy.

It seemed to me as I listened to the speech that the Minister of Finance was trying to sprinkle a little bit of benefit over the entire Canadian economy so that he would gather some headlines for the next day or that the government was actually doing something about the economy. Perhaps that is his objective and perhaps to some extent he has succeeded.

But the concern of many people is that we are facing practically an implosion of our manufacturing and processing industry in this country. A light sprinkling of reducing corporate taxes by one per cent or the surtax by one per cent is really meaningless.