

The Budget—Mr. Ouellet

years' service instead of ten. Individuals would also be allowed to take their benefits with them if they move to another job, a frequent occurrence during initial years of service among many Canadian workers. Further proposals will broaden pension coverage for full-time and part-time workers. There are provisions providing survivor benefits and ensuring equal treatment of Canadian working men and women. In addition, the Budget proposes to broaden considerably the Canada Pension Plan. We therefore have a whole series of pension-related measures that ought to help Canadian workers.

Mr. Speaker, the Government intends to take further steps to improve the dialogue between workers, business and government, and I am referring to a proposal originated by my own Department of Labour. I am therefore pleased to be able to confirm today that Cabinet has approved the establishment of a government-union employee interchange program. The program embodies a concept first described in the Throne Speech. It will foster the exchange of personnel between labour organizations and federal Government departments for periods of up to two years. I believe that this program will improve understanding and communications between unions and the Canadian Government.

The experience and know-how of the labour movement can be extremely useful in the preparation of Government policy. On the other hand, civil servants will be able to explain to the unions how the Government's decision-making process works and how they can best put their case to the Government. Until now, there have been no meaningful employee exchanges between the Public Service of Canada and the Labour movement under the current program. However, I think that with time we can hope to have an admittedly limited but none the less efficient group of public servants and union representatives with the wide knowledge and experience which one can acquire only by working for a while in the other's field of work.

This project will cost \$1.9 million over a three-year period, mostly to offset the cost of salaries paid to detached employees. The program will be operational on a limited basis with only five person-years in the first year, fifteen person-years in the second year and twenty person-years in the third year.

The other administrative provisions will be nearly identical to those of the Public Service Commission Interchange Canada Program. Each exchange will flow from an agreement between the originating organization—the host organization—and, of course, the worker who is directly concerned. As in the case of the Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre whose establishment I was pleased to announce recently, this new initiative of the Government of Canada shows to what extent we are committed to improving our relations with the labour movement.

In short, Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Labour I fully endorse the remarks of the Minister of Finance that we cannot be

satisfied with past performance and past habits if Canadians are to meet the challenge of the future. Nor can we hope to work together towards a more promising future at the expense of another segment of the population. That is why the Government has made a series of proposals to meet the needs of workers and pave the way for more harmonious labour relations in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I think we can say that Canadian workers, wherever they are, can look to this Budget as a guarantee of better and more numerous job opportunities, improved pension plans and more input in decisions which affect their life at work. In addition, the Government's labour program concerning employee detachment will surely have a strong impact on relations between unions and the Government. As for me, I shall continue to be attentive and responsive to the concerns and legitimate needs of labour. In fact, I plan to emphasize consultations with the unions so that they may have a voice in discussions on a national level. I am convinced that some type of social contract must of necessity be entered into with the unions which contract necessarily implies a spirit of co-operation if we want to have a sustained and equitable recovery. Mr. Speaker, working together can be really effective if each and everyone is willing to do his share. The Government believes in this principle and it was in this spirit that the Minister of Finance prepared his budget which I support enthusiastically.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): There will now be a 10-minute period for questions, answers and comments.

• (1130)

[*English*]

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, I have two questions in two areas with which the Minister dealt. The first question is with respect to the Employee Profit Participation Plan. The Minister indicated that at an early date he would be having consultation with business and union leaders in order to bring in the best and most workable plan. I wonder if the Minister would be good enough to identify what business and union associations he would be consulting with. Could he identify them by name today? If not, I understand that he might want to give me that information at a later date.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I have already had discussions with the representatives of the Canada Labour Congress and we have agreed to meet with officers of the CLC later in March. I have also been in touch with the Chairman of the Canadian Federation of Labour who told me that he would approve of a meeting with his senior assistants before the end of March.

I would also like to consult with other Canadian labour organizations. I have not yet had any conversation or exchanged any correspondence with other national unions, but I plan on doing so within the next few days.