

The Address—Hon. J. N. Turner

• (1600)

[English]

As I have said, I think anyone who has had even a glimpse or made a professional study of economics would realize that one of the problems in achieving stabilization today is estimating the time lag for fiscal and economic policies to take effect.

Mr. Lawrence: The premiers told you in August what would happen.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): I am confident that the new plan can be very effectively utilized to create jobs this winter. The Local Initiatives and Training on the Job programs are already in operation and can quickly be expanded to absorb more of the many applications already on hand. The \$60 million put into additional job creating activities by federal departments will all be directed to types of activity that can be launched with little or no delay.

As I have stressed on many occasions since becoming Minister of Finance nearly a year ago, my first and most urgent priority is jobs, and the economic thrust of the government has to be in that direction. The goal of the government is to bring about the creation of a sufficient number of jobs to provide productive employment for every Canadian who wants to work, who is able to work, and who is prepared to make a reasonable effort to find work.

No one should be under any illusion that this goal will be easily or quickly reached. We in this country face unique and extraordinary problems in achieving this objective because of the fact that our labour force is growing much more rapidly than that of any other industrialized country in the world, because of the chronic disparities of economic opportunity that have confronted a number of regions across Canada, because of unusually large cut backs in production and employment during the rigorous winter months, and because of our exceptional vulnerability to developments abroad. The substantial job creating programs that I outlined earlier will play an important part in helping to alleviate the problem of seasonal unemployment this winter and during the next two years.

The Speech from the Throne outlined a number of new proposals designed to reinforce the structure of our economy. Because of my particular responsibilities in this portfolio, I am very much interested in those measures that are aimed at strengthening the position of small business in this country. One of the prime aspects of the economic thrust of the throne speech is the health of small business in Canada. The government intends to aid independent entrepreneurs by strengthening and coordinating its management and consulting services across the country, and by improving access for the small businessman to financing facilities. This will involve, among other things, a fundamental review of the role of the Industrial Development Bank.

I have been concerned ever since I took on this portfolio, and have said so often, and not by way of plagiaristic exercise, about new policies and new programs to strengthen small and medium sized business in this coun-

[Mr. Lewis.]

try. It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now that much of our industrial dialogue is among big business, big labour and big government. It is all too easy to overlook the vital role played by the thousands and thousands of small businesses in Canada.

An indication of the importance of that role is provided by the fact that an estimated 30 per cent of all Canadians are employed in businesses with 100 workers or less. But small business is more than just a significant source of employment in Canada. It is also a major and dynamic creative element in the economy, playing a large part in generating new inventions, new technologies, new products and new marketing methods. For all these reasons I am determined, as Minister of Finance, that not only should the vital role being played by small business in Canada not be overlooked, but that we in the federal government should do everything that is reasonably possible and practical to reinforce it. My colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie), will elaborate on that.

Maintenance of the strong and balanced growth of our economy, that is a fundamental prerequisite for the achievement of so many of our other objectives, depends to a considerable extent on the proper exercise of monetary and fiscal policies. Both of these policies have been highly expansionary over a period of many months, and have played a major role in stimulating strong economic growth.

Sir, I believe that there is widespread confidence in Canada that production, employment and real incomes will continue to grow strongly during 1973. In its recently published Economic Outlook for December, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development forecast that real economic growth in Canada in 1973 would again exceed that of every other major industrial nation except Japan. A few months ago the Institute for Quantitative Analysis at the University of Toronto, one of the foremost independent short-term forecasting groups in this country, projected that the economy would grow by nearly 7½ per cent in 1973, following an increase of around 6½ per cent last year.

I do not want to indulge in any forecasting of my own at the present time. Economic forecasting is not an exact science, and it has never been my policy to get into the forecasting game. But, as the throne speech said, and as I have already told the House, it is my intention to bring down a budget at the earliest opportunity, to report to the House fully on the state of our economy and of government finances. I can assure hon. members that this budget will put forward major new fiscal and other measures to deal responsibly and effectively with our most pressing economic and social problem, our most pressing human problem, the problem of jobs, and ensure that strong and balanced economic growth, accompanied by reasonable price stability, is achieved in Canada during the year ahead. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank hon. members for their courtesy.

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to say it is somewhat of an honour to follow the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner). Since coming here in 1970, I have watched his career with some interest. Today it seems that basically what he has done has been to throw