

The Address—Mr. Broadbent

notion that somehow the federal Liberals have come up with \$500 million which was not already there. That is bogus, cynical politics, Mr. Speaker, which Canadians are tired of. There is hardly an element of fairness or justice in that approach to an important issue.

There is also the matter of jobs. I am not going to speak in detail about this subject. I have on other occasions made a number of concrete suggestions. I will have a few to make today. However, I do want to say that although the Prime Minister is proud of his record on lowering inflation, to say the least, he certainly exaggerated the benefits of the Government's six and five program. Perhaps it had some role to play, but I know, and the Prime Minister knows, that all kinds of economists in this country, in universities and in the private sector, have said that the main reason that inflation went down was not the six and five program. The main reason inflation went down was that unemployment went almost out of sight. That is why inflation went down in this country. I say to the Prime Minister: If he is proud of the six and five goals, if he thinks they were important, and if he could set targets for lowering inflation, why in heaven's name, when we have more than a million unemployed, can we not set the same percentage target for unemployment and work to bring that down?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: We have received no such commitment for, say, next year, or in two years, whatever it would take to meet a 6 per cent level of unemployment—and I am not defining that as full employment, either. I am saying that it might be a realistic target for us to aim at in the months ahead, if we had a government which was really committed to the issue of job creation. The Government not only failed to set the target in the Throne Speech, but we had more trickery, more deception and more pretending of concern.

We had a reference to a billion dollar job fund. I am sure a lot of young men and women in the Prairies, who were late in feeling the effects of the recession but are now certainly feeling it, and young men and women in British Columbia, in Quebec or anywhere in the nation, when they heard about that billion dollars, said, "Oh, boy, there is a billion dollars of new money. The Government is really beginning to move". But within 24 hours, indeed earlier than that, it soon became clear that it was not a billion dollars. In fact, three different Ministers of the Crown, including the Prime Minister himself, had three different figures with respect to the money which was really involved. The point I am making is that this is not addressing the issue with any kind of fairness in terms of the economy. Certainly unemployment is as important as inflation, so why do we not set realistic targets? If we are going to bring in a new program for youth—and God knows we need it when we have 500,000 unemployed young Canadians—why not say honestly, "Here is an amount of money we are going to allocate within our framework", instead of creating an artificial bogus figure which can dampen the morale and expectations of a generation which has already become disillusioned?

I would like to make some suggestions on the matter of youth. We think it is important to use the private sector, which is now and will be for whatever future I can see in this land the main source of creating jobs in this country. We believe there should be a significant expansion of the subsidization program to small businesses so it could pay wages to young people when young people are taken on by those firms, say, over a two-year period, provided arrangements are made to ensure that older workers are not laid off simply to hire younger people and to get the government subsidization. We think it makes sense to use funds like that. The private sector, the small business sector particularly, employs most Canadians and they are the most hard-pressed in terms of expansion. It is more difficult for them to get capital. We believe it makes sense to give some young Canadians a sense of hope and expectation over this difficult but, one hopes, transitional period, by using government funds to provide that kind of subsidization. We would support legislation which did that.

However, in the same context, we also say that this is a country which has 500,000 young men and women who not only cannot get a job but, in province after province in this land, cannot get into community colleges, technical institutions and universities because there have been cutbacks, the facilities have been curtailed. So what we are saying to the federal Government and to the provincial governments is, let us expand the money which has been cut back by the federal Liberals in the last couple of years in terms of transfer funds going to the provinces for post-secondary education so that some of those young people can get jobs. They certainly will not all be able to get jobs no matter what party forms the government in the next year or two, but many of them could at least go on to higher education.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister himself talked about the tough competitive world we live in, and it is a cliché but, like many clichés, it is true. Therefore, if we train our young people and give them greater skills, not only will they benefit as individuals, but all of us as a nation will benefit.

There is also the question of technological change. Surely, for advanced industrial nations—and by no means for them exclusively—it is a major concern for the present and for the foreseeable future. We feel that the starting point for dealing with technological change is not simply the establishment of committees and studies. My God, it has been studied to death. I have limited time myself, as Leader of my Party, to read that many articles, but I have read an ample number of them and I know there are a lot of studies which have been done. We do not need many more studies. We should be aware, first of all, what we are talking about when we are talking about technological change. We should keep in mind that technological change should be for people, for the workers who are involved in manufacturing, for the producers of goods and services and for consumers in our society. Surely they ought to be the prime consideration. With that in mind we say yes, we want to modernize in this country. The Leader of the Opposition talked about that. We want to be competitive, but the terms of