

Job Creation

Mr. Axworthy: Aside from the boos that are echoing in this chamber, the fact is there is tremendous growth potential. Of the last 15 months, 13 have shown a productive growth in employment, better than any country in the OECD. We have demonstrated that we can create jobs. In 1980 alone we created 330,000 jobs, the best record of any country. The only credit we get from those opposite is "do more".

We realize we are facing problems at this time. The difference between this side of the House and that side of the House is that we are prepared to take hard decisions to face those problems and not fool ourselves with dogmatic fantasies pulled out of text books that were obsolete thirty years ago. That is the difference between members on this side of the House and that side.

• (1610)

Our approach to creating jobs is not to say there is a simplistic answer, as proposed by the NDP or Conservative party. We believe that one has to take a multiplicity approach and to engage government in a variety of investments. We have said in the budget papers set forward on economic development strategy that we will invest approximately \$65 billion into economic development initiatives in this country in the next five years. This government has developed a wide variety of new technology investment in the economic development envelope so that we can help the Canadian economy to develop sectors of industrial resource activity with growth potential. The government has committed \$1.5 billion this year alone to research and development so that it may provide for greater productivity.

The government is developing a new network of microelectronic centres across Canada so that it may engage in new product development in that critical area of the economy. Across Canada the government has established a number of investments. For example, Mitel Corporation, New Brunswick, is one of the most significant achievements where we moved a new industry into a high unemployment area. This is the government's ambition, Mr. Speaker. It is not simply to throw money away, as the NDP would like us to do, but to be careful, cautious and relevant in our investments and put the money where it will do the most good. That is the position of this government.

We do have a basic plan contained in our industrial strategy. There are potentials that must be unlocked and unleashed so that they create the kind of growth that the country is capable of. But we will not do this simply by banging a drum and beating it loudly; it must be done by careful planning and management. The government is putting in place the kind of management that will ensure that there is an allocation of those major industrial benefits across Canada.

The budget contains \$1.4 billion for the modernization of the transportation system in western Canada. How often have we heard the rhetoric of the other parties saying that we must modernize the railway system? The difference between the parties opposite and our party is that they talk about it but we do it. Our money is on the table.

An hon. Member: Is that an ironclad guarantee?

Mr. Axworthy: The money is on the table, ready to modernize the transportation system in western Canada. Furthermore, we also see that that growth potential must be broadly shared by all members of the community. The money must be used by those who have been on the sidelines of the economic game. That is why we have included the sum of \$345 million in the budget for the economic development of native people across Canada. It will give them the opportunity to develop their own enterprise; to develop their own business activity; to give them the capacity and ability to take advantage of the new resource wealth of western Canada.

It seems to me that is a major achievement of this government. We are putting the money where it will do the most good. We are allocating it where the need is greatest. We are putting it where those who can invest it carefully will benefit the most.

When members opposite broadbrush the strokes and say that there is nothing in the budget for anyone, it simply means that they are incapable of reading or comprehending what is contained therein; and it could be a combination of both. I think it is a form of ideological blindness. Hon. members simply do not want to see what is before them. That is the real problem. As long as that ideological blindness continues, then we will not see any kind of enlightened economic debate in this House. What we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, is coming to grips with real problems.

For example, let me point out the condemnation raised by the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae), the once and future king of the Ontario NDP, who said, "Why are they doing direct employment jobs?" He says that is a piffle, a nothing. In this fiscal year we will invest \$378 million of direct government funds into direct job creation, creating jobs for 80,000 Canadians in this fiscal year alone by direct employment means. That is a record worth talking about.

I do not know why it is that the member for Hamilton Mountain is so incapable of understanding or comprehending that that kind of investment will be allocated particularly in those areas where the needs are greatest. The hon. member talks about the fishermen in Newfoundland. We have allocated a special fund to the fishermen's union in Newfoundland to develop work projects, some 30 or 40 additional work projects, so that the fishermen remain employed and engaged in useful enterprises in that province. We allocated additional funds to the construction workers in Winnipeg, to the fishermen in British Columbia and the unemployed workers in Windsor. In other words, the government is allocating and targeting its direct employment funds and not throwing them around. The government is trying to use the money as we believe the taxpayers want us to use it, which is wisely and well and where the need is greatest. Those programs are in place.

Furthermore, the hon. member tends to neglect the other kinds of programs that this government has introduced. The ILAP program is designed to deal with communities that are experiencing major industrial problems and will provide grants