

The Chamber then refers to the preamble of their submission which states:

It is absolutely essential that our longer term problems not be overlooked in any effort to improve the near-term outlook.

It goes on to ask for measures to help business produce and provide jobs in the long term.

We all know what the Minister's reaction was to that. For the first time in history, we see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) throwing around short-term freebees and committing the country's tottering economy to pay for them over the ensuing four years.

● (1730)

And finally, the Chamber listed a handful of activities that it said the Government should not undertake, such as the raising of personal taxes and the further deindexing of personal income taxes. The Minister's response was, as we all know, to do just the opposite in both cases.

That is quite a record for a Minister who made such a show of consulting with and listening to those in the private sector who, from first-hand experience, have demonstrated that they know what they are talking about. Or is it really, as so many of us have long suspected, that it has actually become part of the Liberal dogma that nobody knows more about anything than a Minister in a Liberal Government?

I would point out to the Minister that the word "consult" means more than merely allowing people to talk in his presence. It also implies a certain taking into consideration and a seeking of advice that has clearly not been among his activities since assuming the portfolio of finance, any more than it was before then.

What then would it have been reasonable to expect to find in this budget if it had been aimed at achieving an improvement in the lot of Canadians? First, while recognizing that our future prospects depend directly on our ability to contain inflation, the situation at the moment demands that he take some meaningful measures to attack the level of unemployment. And by "meaningful measures" I do not mean declaring it to be his "dominant concern" in the opening line of his speech and then dismissing it from further consideration for the rest of the exercise, which I believe took one hour and forty minutes.

The fact is that by the budget's own projections, some 262,000 fewer Canadians will be working at the end of what he presents as the first year of the recovery than were working in the fourth quarter of 1981. The fact is he calculates that it will be 1986 before unemployment drops to the level that seemed so terrible in 1982. The fact is that the sum total of jobs provided under his direct employment creation programs come to no more than 81,600; 17,000 of which are only summer jobs, and 36,000 of which under the NEED Program are so brief as to boil down to a total of only 2,000 person years all told. We are back to the smoke and mirrors deal again.

The flagship program, the "Special Recovery Capital Projects", is proudly announced as consisting of \$2.2 billion in

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funded projects. Unfortunately, it appears on deeper inspection that only \$1.5 billion of that represents new spending, and no more than \$460 million of that is to be spent this fiscal year. On top of that, when we take a look at the administrative procedures involved, projects will be under way within six months of approval by some Cabinet committee that has not even been set up yet. It is pretty obvious that it will be next Spring at the earliest before there is any serious impact from this source. From over here it sounds more as though the program were directed to benefit the Liberal Party rather than the unemployed. Six hundred and twenty one thousand young people were unemployed in March. The rate of unemployment in this critical segment of the population stands at 21.3 per cent.

So let us look at the Minister's special youth initiatives. Once again it is smoke and mirrors. There will be, he tells us, an extra \$70 million for summer student employment programs over last year. What he does not say is that last year funding for this program dropped from \$120 million to \$100 million. So his celebrated \$170 million program represents an increase of only \$50 million over two years. Not quite six and five, but in no way the magnificent gesture it is pretended to be. I must say that at first glance the youth internship program appears to have merit, and I extend my congratulations to the Minister on it. But at the same time, I must say that his job corps leaves me somewhat confused.

Page 17 of his budget papers tells me that this program will provide "temporary employment opportunities, personal and career assessment, counselling, training and other support services." With all due respect, it seems to me that, given a choice between "personal and career assessment, counselling" and getting a job, I think quite a few of our young Canadians would opt for the job. Or perhaps I have it all wrong and those "temporary employment opportunities" are as "personal and career assessors", or as counsellors. Now there is an idea, the sociological equivalent of perpetual motion. Little by little, all the youngsters will be hired as counsellors and assessors to counsel and assess those whose turn it is to be unemployed from their jobs as counsellors and assessors. The perfect solution!

This brings us to the Department of National Defence which is to be given \$75 million over the next two years to enroll 5,000 young Canadians in the reserves. I give the Government full marks for this, and in particular the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Lamontagne). But what happens to them then? Suppose they want to stay in the military and pursue a military career, as I am quite sure many would if they find it to their liking. Are they simply told "No, your time is up, you have to go now."? If so, it will make a mockery of our once-proud military and all that it once was. But if not, does that mean that entry to the forces will be limited to those who have come through the Government's make-work program? Somebody over there had better be thinking about this sort of thing right now.