

The Canadian Economy

If the minister envisages a short-term reduction in taxation, something he will commit himself to only until the end of 1972 and no longer, then personal income tax reductions of more than 3 per cent would have been effective, far fairer and more just than these short-term cuts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hees: And they would have produced a lot more jobs.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: So far as corporations are concerned, there would have been a much more beneficial effect on investments and incentives—and this would not have cost the government a cent—if the minister had announced that he was going to defer implementation of those parts of his tax reform bill relating to corporations. That would not have cost him a cent.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must interrupt the Leader of the Opposition to mention that he has received a three-minute credit to compensate for interruptions, in the same way as the Minister of Finance was granted a three-minute extension of his time to take into account the interruptions when he was speaking. The Leader of the Opposition may pursue his speech with the unanimous consent of the House.

• (8:50 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Stanfield: I will be very brief, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the generosity of the House in this regard. I am pleased to see that the government has recognized the need for action. Some of the measures proposed will certainly be helpful.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: If the government takes my advice, it can use this money, as I pointed out, much more effectively and to much greater advantage than it has been. We have had perversely bad judgment from this government in economic matters.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The budget tonight, coming after the June budget, is the best proof of this. The government has been wallowing around. I say to the minister in all sincerity that the country has no confidence in him. I suggest to him, and I say this to his face through you, Mr. Speaker, we have no confidence in him.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: He better resign.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I wish to make one further comment. I do not like to make it in this House because I do not like to speak of people who are not here to answer back, but it is necessary to do so. The government needs new economic advisers. There is no better proof of that than this budget tonight.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, although I have seen the government's program only since seven o'clock, it is my intention to deal as well as I can with the actual program presented by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson). I start by expressing some pleasure that at last the government has accepted the challenge of the times and has seen fit, far too late and far too inadequately, to produce a program to deal with the unemployment expected this winter.

The first point I make is that nowhere in his statement and nowhere in the documents that I have seen is there any attempt to estimate either the level of unemployment that may be expected this winter or the number of jobs that the program which the minister has presented will create.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: I am particularly concerned about the latter, because there is an indication as to the kind of thing with which we are dealing. In the documents which I have seen, we are informed that the \$160 million loan program to municipalities last year produced a total of 13,000 jobs. I ask hon. members to note this. Thirteen thousand jobs were produced with the \$160 million, the equivalent, the document states, of 13,000 Canadians for a year. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, the program presented by the Minister of Finance obviously will not even scratch the surface of the real unemployment crisis expected this winter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: It is the duty of the minister to tell this Parliament and the country how many jobs this program is intended to create. On the basis of the information that we now have, it is my guess that we will be lucky if the people without work in Canada this winter have jobs to a total of 30,000 to 50,000 out of a total unemployment likely to be as high as 700,000, 800,000 or more. I am not talking about the multiplier effect that may result six, eight or 10 months from now. I am talking about the four or five months this winter. I stick my neck out to say we will be lucky if 50,000 of the unemployed will have jobs as a result of this program. The reason the minister does this is well illustrated in the nonsense in which he indulged in the introductory paragraph of his speech. He repeated the same pollyanna rubbish that was repeated time and again during the last 18 months.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: He still expresses the same complacency and satisfaction with the performance of the economy. I cannot think of anything more nonsensical than this sentence in his speech: "Our unemployment rate is not derived from a failure of employment to grow." How stupid can anyone be, Mr. Speaker?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: Of course, the total employment has grown. If it had not grown, we would have two or three million Canadians unemployed. There has been a steady increase in the labour force of between 250,000 and 300,000 for years. If employment did not grow, you would have a cumulative quarter of a million unemployed in each year