

The Budget—Mr. Darling

something we do not want to brag about but which is certainly an improvement. The rate is still much too high and steps are being taken to bring the rate down and correct the situation.

There have been 43,000 new jobs opened up since the last election compared with the loss of 283,000 jobs for youth under the Liberals' guidance. University, community, college and high school students stand to benefit from the new Challenge 86 Program this summer. The business I mentioned earlier in my home village will hire 10 students. It is no wonder that employers across Canada are sitting up, taking notice and taking advantage of the summer youth program.

The federal Government has set aside \$210 million for the purpose of helping students find work this summer. Last year Challenge 85 was a great success and secured some 101,000 jobs for students. The Challenge 86 Program invites provincial and municipal Governments as well as businesses and non-profit organizations to use the program to their best advantage. The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) has assured us that Challenge 86 is not just another make-work program to keep students busy. She has clearly delineated the difference between mere activity and wholesome productivity. Her program is designed to create career and learning-related summer jobs which may be of great use in the future. Priority will be given to students to fill the 25,000 jobs available through the 1986 census as well.

While the Government is tackling the problem of high unemployment—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but I would like to ask him to conclude his speech, please. His time has already expired, but he may conclude.

Mr. Darling: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, let me emphasize that this Budget is certainly going to do a great job of putting Canada back on the rails. It is going to cut down the deficit. It is going to provide more jobs. I am certainly pleased to commend the Minister of Finance for the great job he has done.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, first, I want to commend the Hon. Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) on his comments. I think they are heart-felt. However, when he talks about how this Budget is going to tighten the screws on certain things, I think what he probably means is that it is going to tighten the screws on the low-income earners and those who can least afford to pay.

The Hon. Member mentioned in his speech some concerns he had about the Post Office. I wonder if he could clarify to this House, since we have been receiving a number of mixed messages, what the position is of the Progressive Conservative Party or of the Government on the Post Office? Do they believe in a universally accessible postal system? Do they want to privatize it, or does the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) want to come in like the Canadian Rambo to tell the postal workers how this Government sees things? What is the position of the federal Government on the Post Office?

Mr. Darling: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) for that question. I would say that I hope that the Government's position on Canada Post is to have a post office that will deliver the mail within a reasonable time. I am well aware that there are targets and I would think that it is an improbable target to have Canada Post made self-sufficient within two years, so I am not saying that at all. However, the Canadian people feel that they should receive better service from their post office. A good number of years ago, the railways were carrying a lot of the mail. I was in business for a great number of years and I knew that in my own home village of Burks Falls, if I posted a letter by one o'clock in the morning—because I used to put my mail right on the train—it would be delivered in Toronto on that very day. So we are all hoping there will be much better service.

I am aware that it is a necessary service and that it is going to be pretty hard to make it a profitable service without increasing the rates even more than they are now, and they are too high in the view of a lot of people.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the reason I asked this specific question of the Hon. Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) is that, obviously, he represents not only urban centres but also a number of scattered rural areas which cannot necessarily be guaranteed a mail delivery if we were to move toward a private system. This is my concern and I think one which I would like the Hon. Member to address. If in fact threats made by certain Ministers of the Government about privatization were to be carried out, does the Hon. Member believe that not only Burks Falls but a number of small rural areas in his constituency would receive full delivery service, or would the service be concentrated on the major urban areas like the City of Toronto and the City of Hamilton?

Mr. Darling: Mr. Speaker, I must agree with the Hon. Member that certainly it would not be a profitable business for private carriers to deliver the mail in rural ridings. In my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka there is only one town in the entire riding which has street delivery of mail. The rest of the mail goes through the post office. I am also aware that the population is scattered, as it is in a great many of my colleagues' ridings. Certain Members of Parliament and, I suppose, prominent Ministers, have made statements that they would like to see the Canada post privatized. We all have certain ideas and dreams. That is not my view, but I believe it is the responsibility of the Government to try to do something to see that we do receive better service.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member about another element of the Budget. I think it is an element about which he has expressed a concern. That is the decision in the Economic Statement of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) of November of 1984 to prevent early retirees from collecting unemployment insurance. I am referring not only to those who work for the Armed Forces, those who fought in some of our wars such as the Korean War, but to those who worked in private companies like Black & Decker,