

The Budget—Mr. Maltais

past year I have been travelling throughout my riding since the various lay-offs have taken place, to find out what people want. That was drawn repeatedly to the attention of the Minister of Finance. Last night, I must say that I recognized myself in the budget speech. Today, I received numerous phone calls in my constituency office as well as in my office in Ottawa from people in my region saying: "For some time, we have had unemployment problems and no hope. Last night, the Minister of Finance not only gave us hope, but he said that he would take action. Right now, the top priority is to take action, not to keep talking and repeating that one is going to try."

The Minister was quite specific when he said that more than 100 projects had been selected and were ready to be implemented. What does that mean, 100 projects selected and ready to be implemented? We have to translate that statement into real terms. Surely, from a theoretical point of view, this does not mean much. But if we decide in my region to build airports, harbours, shipways, it makes a lot of sense in fishing areas. It means orders for concrete, nails, wood and stone. It means new found pride for the workers, hope for their families and first and foremost, security. That is what it means in real terms. If such projects are implemented all over the country, it will mean in Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, everywhere, in the Lac-Saint-Jean area new initiatives taking shape, which will in turn allow those communities to organize in order to improve public infrastructures that the Minister has set himself to prioritize in his budget. That is what it means in actual terms. It means that businessmen and contractors can already hope to see their machinery in operation and that workers will be rehired. That is what it means. It also means that young Canadians will be able to carry on their studies, knowing that their parents will work and be able to pay part of the expenses. It means creating a psychological environment favourable to work and security. That is what the country needed and what Canadians were asking the Minister of Finance to do in a budget. Those are not expenditures selected at random in the country. Those expenditures were planned. It is important to point out that those were planned expenditures, either by federal ministers or by various Crown corporations. Therefore, no improvisation there. Moreover, the Minister was perfectly clear about these projects last night, when he stated, as reported on page 3:

More than a hundred subjects have been selected. They are in the advanced planning stage.

So, Hon. Members opposite are wrong when they suggest that these projects were hastily put together. As a matter of fact, they had been submitted to Treasury Board a year or a year and a half ago, and if they had not been approved, it is not because they were not good enough, but merely because of lack of funds.

This means that in my own area of Sept-Iles-Port-Cartier, the local Chamber of Commerce, town councils and industrial planners will be able to suggest ways for private industries to set up shop on these public structures. In this context, it was

wonderful of the Minister of Finance to announce that he was offering up to \$2.4 billion in tax credit to small and medium size corporations to help them expand, streamline their operation or recoup their losses of the past two years due to recession. That is what these corporations in our area had been asking for. Having run too many bills and with the high level of interest rates they lacked the necessary cash flow to grow and to keep up with their daily operations. Thanks to the measures which the Minister of Finance has just announced, business people are getting exactly what they wanted. This was evidenced in the comments made by business people to the news media; they all said this budget is one of the finest of the past decade as far as the private sector and the business community are concerned. Members opposite have constantly asked the Government to take steps which would not only help the private sector but would also stimulate the economy. We find that more specifically in the budget which is aimed at young people. It is meant for young people who assuredly could not be ignored. Whenever we talk with parents, we realize what it means to young people. Not more than 15 minutes ago, I was talking with the Mayor of Gagnon, Mr. Coicou. He was quite pleased to hear that the projects announced in the budget could also be implemented in this area and you cannot imagine what he asked me. How strange that real life should be so different from what goes on in this House of Commons. He asked me whether it would be possible to add a small amount of \$15,000 to \$21,000 to create jobs for students because the Sidbec-Normines company is not hiring anyone this year in Gagnon and he explained how this would relieve his municipal council and heads of families to know that their young people could have summer jobs that would allow them to go out at Gagnon to attend the community college in Sept-Iles or various Canadian universities. That is what he asked me and this is no begging. He was asking that on behalf of his community. This is something positive and this is what people want, they want to work. We have to give them the means to do so. The budget contains novel proposals for putting people to work and that is no improvisation nor wasting of public funds. It is an investment in the future, in public infrastructures and in young people who will be allowed to find some work there.

● (1710)

We should consider the various measures, Mr. Speaker, and referring to the Katimavik program I remember quite well when the Government formed by the party opposite wanted to scrap that program. I would have liked to refer to the testimonies of young people who are enjoying a special experience thanks to the Katimavik program and the Minister of Finance has earmarked \$40 million for that program. In the first place it is a personality development program for Canadians and I think that Members from all sides of the House do agree with such a principle. Second, this program will enable our young