

Oral Questions

18 months when all the Minister is going to create is 60,000 new jobs?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I am sorry if it appears that the Hon. Member did not hear my first answer. What I pointed out to him is that out of the people exhausting benefits many of them find alternate employment within a matter of the first six or seven weeks. Certainly we do not want to design a program that would provide a disincentive for them to go to work. Therefore, we want to design a program that is targeted very much at those who face the greatest hardship.

In addition to that, as I pointed out in answer to previous questions, we also have in place other employment programs, for example, the Canada Community Development Program which is presently providing a substantial amount of employment in the Hon. Member's own riding. He knows what is available to provide those kinds of alternative employment. We are trying to cover as broad a base as we can. We have to husband our resources as carefully as possible. That is another reason why we have invited the Provinces, the private sector, other communities and non-profit groups to join us in this effort so that we can share responsibility in providing as much employment as possible to those in need.

Mr. Riis: Madam Speaker, the Minister is saying that his programs are trying to provide employment to get people back on UIC. That is not the kind of job-creation programs that we in this Party would like to see the Government implement.

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WELFARE**REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL FUND FOR MUNICIPALITIES**

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, I have been asked to rise today on a matter on behalf of one community in western Canada, but the same could be done for communities across Canada. The Mayor of Kamloops has asked me to ask the Minister of Finance for some special consideration. In our city of Kamloops we have hundreds of people each day who are unable to provide food for their families. These are exhaustees. The Department of Welfare encourages these individuals to approach the Church, the Salvation Army, and food banks in our community, because they are not eligible for welfare. Would the Minister of Finance consider giving some special consideration for a special fund to allow municipalities across Canada to provide food for people who fall between the UIC and welfare traps?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, there is a social assistance program in this country to which the federal government contributes 50 per cent of the cost. There is an Unemployment Insurance Program to which the federal government also contributes quite significantly. There

are cases quite obviously where there may be a lag between the time when somebody gets off unemployment insurance and gets into welfare.

Mr. Riis: There is no lag.

Mr. Lalonde: My hon. friend says there is no lag. If there is no lag, then these people will get social assistance.

Miss Jewett: They are not eligible.

Mr. Lalonde: My hon. friend had better explain even further then.

Miss Jewett: You do not understand. They are not eligible.

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FINANCE**ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, if I could draw his attention away from his bedmates over there.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wilson: In the Minister's budget speech yesterday, he announced two decisions which will reduce employment in the country. The first is the increase in unemployment insurance premiums by some 40 per cent to 50 per cent. The second is to refuse to withdraw or reverse the reduction in the capital cost allowances that came about as a result of the November budget last year. Both of these he said were because they would cause an increase in the deficit. How does the Minister justify these decisions when there will continue to be unnecessary government spending, such as the 17.1 per cent increase in the administrative costs of the 12 largest departments of government as I pointed out in my speech yesterday?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the question of administrative costs in the Government are constantly being reviewed. The President of the Treasury Board will have an opportunity to address that very issue in the next short while. I will provide to the Hon. Member full explanations as to the reasons for particular increases in particular departments. The Minister, however, will have an opportunity to examine the figures mentioned by the Hon. Member and explain the situation fully. I might add that those costs have been examined by the various parliamentary committees when the estimates were tabled and they have been approved by this Parliament. I invite my friend to reflect on those considerations that have taken place in the various expenditure programs.

MEASURES TO CUT GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I cannot understand why the Minister said that the particular question I raised could be addressed some time in the future.