

Oral Questions

We have to blend the policies in order to get effective results. I believe that we have blended those policies in an effective way to create jobs, and to reinforce the 201,000 jobs which have been created since September. As the same time, as that momentum of economic activity continues we are going to take another big bite out of the deficit because of the higher tax revenues we will receive from that increased revenue.

* * *

HOUSING

STIMULATION OF CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. In view of the critical housing situation in major metropolitan areas—there is a .3 vacancy rate in Scarborough apartments—and in view of the great spin-off potential for job-creation in the housing industry, will the Minister of Finance indicate ways in which his Budget policies will stimulate new housing construction in Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can say very directly and very clearly the way in which this Budget will generate increased housing activity, which we believe is very important for the country. Lower interest rates and lower mortgage rates are the fundamental cause of increased activity in the housing industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Since September 4 we have seen mortgage rates come down by close to 3 per cent. We believe that the direction of those interest rates as a result of this Budget will be towards a further reduction. That, Mr. Speaker, will have a far reaching impact, not only on housing but on manufacturing activity and a wide range of economic activity.

* * *

THE BUDGET

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENTS

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, no matter how good a face the Minister of Finance wishes to put on his Budget, there are many parts of it which are obviously deficient and perhaps even contain oversights. One cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear, and he knows that.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Johnston: He has four weeks before Parliament rises. Will he consider, during those weeks, taking corrective action in those areas where problems have been raised by people right across the country? The elderly are suffering, along with the

unemployed. The regions are being savaged. Even the Minister of Justice knows that.

● (1450)

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Johnston: He has four weeks to take corrective action and bring it into the House.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Johnston: Will he do that?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know the Hon. Member has not been in opposition for a long time, and I would like to help him ask the question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I am not quite sure I got the thrust of the question because of the pauses but, as I indicated in response to a previous question, there has been a good degree of support, not just among my colleagues in the House, or editorial writers, but from many Canadians who are saying we are moving in the right direction.

We are finally sitting down and addressing the problems of unemployment and a high deficit. We are doing it in a fair way, and at the same time dealing with the problems of the disabled, and pension reform. There is a lot of meat in this Budget, and I suggest the Hon. Member read it.

ESTIMATES OF JOB CREATION

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, it is true that I have not been in opposition a long time. But he has not been Minister of Finance for a long time, and I would like to help him write his Budget.

There are Members in his own back benches who do not agree with him but who agree with me. The Member from Cape Breton is one. However, the Minister has told us again and again today that this is a job-creation Budget, yet the private experts, if you like, such as Data Resources and Informetrica, show thousands and thousands of lost jobs. The very least he can do is remove the anxiety of those who see themselves threatened by the Budget, and table in this House his Department's estimates of what the job creation is actually going to be. Will he do that?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the Hon. Member that you learn a lot of things in opposition, and I wish him many, many long years there.

The Hon. Member made reference to the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso, who said, in referring to the Cape Breton tax credit in a letter to me: "These initiatives reflect our commitment to creating jobs. Congratulations."

I know the Hon. Member has some understanding of econometric models and knows very well their very severe limitations in projecting what might happen in the economy. I only