

The Budget—Mr. La Salle

There is also a reference to assistance to farmers. It is perfectly obvious, Mr. Speaker, that before even considering legislation that would help farmers give up for and benefit from a pension, they would first have to start making money and have some kind of security. Perhaps they should have considered appropriate measures for stimulating recovery in the agricultural sector. The survival of agriculture is a very important issue, and it is one the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) has failed to address. It is therefore clear that the Budget's proposals with respect to farmers are quite inadequate, and it is also clear that the Minister has decided against considering a single aspect of a major problem today, which is financing. Many farmers are still faced with the exorbitant mortgage rates that prevailed a few years ago, and unemployment is also a problem. I see no specific measures in the Budget aimed at helping those farmers—and every Member of this House is aware of the situation—at saving them from bankruptcy and giving them the security they need to improve their circumstances, and at improving the state of the agricultural sector in this country.

• (1700)

Mr. Speaker, the Budget also proposes to provide some kind of insurance for mortgage rates. Details are not available yet, and the Minister indicated that program criteria will be announced within a month. There is indeed a pressing need, Mr. Speaker, for a measure of security and stability, and the Minister of Finance was not saying anything new when he mentioned this in the Budget yesterday. For many years and many months we have been urging the Government to take action in this particular area and to strengthen the construction industry, which is a vital part of our economy.

And then, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance spoke very eloquently about helping unemployed young people. The new Minister of State for Youth did admit recently that young Canadians are driven to despair, that we are in the process of wasting a whole generation, and she said that quite simply as she was assuming her new responsibilities as Minister. Well now, Mr. Speaker, for the past 15 years this Government was supposed to look after youth, it was supposed to create jobs, something which would have given those young people a much brighter outlook on life than the one they have now.

It would seem that the Government has just realized that between 400,000 and 500,000 young Canadians are now seeking employment and going through a desperate crisis, so the Minister, of course, starts throwing millions of dollars at the problem, \$150 million more! But, Mr. Speaker, suppose all that money is spent or earmarked for programs such as we had before, programs which at best would mean jobs for 15 to 20 per cent of young people for periods ranging from 20 to 26 weeks. Perhaps the lucky ones will indeed work for 52 weeks. But at the end of the programs those young people will have to draw unemployment insurance benefits, just as they have been doing now for the past four or five years. Let us be honest, Mr.

Speaker, those programs are practically just another name for social welfare. Young people are hired to work on projects which hopefully are worthwhile—but not necessarily so, as you know—and then they go back to unemployment insurance. How can such an attitude on the part of the Government build up the confidence of Canadians? How can the country possibly get back on the road to prosperity with temporary programs offering temporary employment? And the Minister proudly claims that the Canadian Government created 400,000 new jobs last year. Never did he say how many of those jobs were temporary. Thousands of those 400,000 jobs lasted for 20 or 26 weeks, then it was the unemployment line again. A good many people do not even figure in the statistics because they have no jobs and their unemployment benefits are exhausted. The answer to that, of course, is provincial social welfare. How easy it is to fool young people by telling them that we now have a Minister of State for Youth who will look after them. It would seem that there was no need for that over the past 15 years, but now we do have a Department of Youth and we will solve the problem which has been there all along. No way, Mr. Speaker! Young people are not that stupid! They should not be likened to children who have no idea about the responsibilities of Government. This budget fails to meet the aspirations of young Canadians and will do nothing to create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to underline the fact that the Minister admitted recently that he had been unable to spend the millions of dollars set aside to create jobs in his 1983 budget and that there still remained between \$300 million and \$400 million to be spent. Naturally, he has to reallocate this money in his new Budget. However, how can he explain the fact that, with respect to the exercise in co-operation or co-ordination with the provinces which he so often mentions, the Government has not yet succeeded in coming to the necessary agreement, not even with my own Province of Quebec? Mr. Speaker, you are aware of the incredible number of jobs lost in Quebec, and I am also aware of the fact that no agreement has been reached yet, and that the necessary efforts have not been made to fulfill the needs of the 1,250 Quebec municipalities which are hoping that an agreement will be signed by the federal and the Quebec Governments. According to my information, and it comes from a good source, this question has now been before the Cabinet for the past few weeks. Yet, the Ministers are themselves from Quebec and there are also well over six dozens of Members of Parliament. All these ministers from Quebec have not seen fit to settle this matter once and for all so that municipal projects which would generate employment may go ahead.

Mr. Speaker, there is one point on which the Minister of Finance is not saying the whole truth, not to say that he is lying to the House. He is not saying the whole truth when he talks about his efforts to create jobs. An agreement could have been signed many months ago; this would have satisfied the municipalities and prevented the Quebec Government from