

The Budget—Mr. McCain

second, they should have the element of an investment in our future; and third, they should be varied enough so as to provide choices. For example, we could create jobs which would involve recycling; reforestation of Crown lands; the renovation and maintenance of historical buildings; the restocking of our rivers, lakes and seas; the cleaning of our rivers, beaches and ravines; the maintenance and repair of homes of retired citizens whose income limits their ability to pay for such work; the provision of supporting personnel to work with the handicapped and retarded children in our society; the preservation of wild life, and a host of other jobs. These are examples only. We have already learned what is needed through government programs like LIP, which was a forerunner of future programs. The LIP program indicated the road we might follow.

The selection of jobs which will be created by the fund will be decided in consultation with provincial authorities, labour unions and management, to ensure that the jobs supported by the fund do not conflict with their interests. The selection will not be without problems, but if we are to provide jobs which will not otherwise be created, some decisions will have to be arrived at despite the problems.

The next consideration which must be dealt with is the wages to be paid for this type of employment. My own view on the wages which might be paid for the kinds of jobs the fund would support is this: if one were to evaluate a job in terms of its usefulness to society, such job should command a much higher wage than many jobs which are included as part of the private enterprise job stock.

Mr. Oberle: We will all be working for the government.

Mr. Caccia: We are inviting members of the opposition to contribute their ideas and improve what we are putting forward. These ideas have been advanced for the sake of improving our entire society, because if we were to do things as members of the opposition think they should be done, we would continue to be boxed in by automation instead of becoming its master.

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This is the challenge that is facing Canadian society and, I suppose, all western society. The number of jobs to be created would of course be determined by the level of unemployment that exists in other sectors of the economy. Some unemployment will always exist because of the fact that people who have to become unemployed need time to search for another job. This would, of course, have to be taken into account.

The other function of the employment insurance fund is to provide income to maintain those who become unemployed while they are seeking employment. The levels of income maintenance would be the same as those paid in benefits through the unemployment insurance fund, with the same maximum and subject to income tax as at present. The duration of the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret I must interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I do not profess to be an expert in a great many fields as did

[Mr. Caccia.]

the former speaker, the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia). With regard to his remarks I would simply like to say that if his expertise in all the other subjects he covered is comparable with his expertise in agriculture, he really lacks expertise and has demonstrated it here tonight.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: There are a lot of barnyard phrases one could use. A great many of them would be applicable as a description of his remarks. However, let us refrain from those in the august company in which we find ourselves, and simply say that his remarks on agriculture certainly must be a reflection on his knowledge of all subjects upon which he spoke. It is extremely limited indeed by that measure.

An hon. Member: Let's hear what you have to say that is constructive.

Mr. McCain: That sarcasm might work back home, but we don't need it here. I find, as I look at the budget, that there are two subjects which are extremely significant by the total absence of constructive suggestions for their well-being. These two subjects are, of course, fishing and agriculture. It is as though fishing did not exist, and agriculture was a consumer problem not worthy of any major reference as far as government is concerned. For too long this has been the treatment of both these subjects.

Not too long ago the people on the east coast of this country suffered a serious amount of storm damage. It was utterly impossible to get any answers from the department. I can assure the minister that as of this moment, with the storm that is presently raging on the Atlantic coast, he better have a policy of a constructive and remunerative nature because the damage in all probability will run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A rather minor storm was estimated to have caused something in excess of \$100,000 damage to lobster traps off Grand Manan about a week ago. The storm of that day is insignificant compared with the one of today. Therefore, what is to be the policy? Is it the intention of the government—the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and all those who sit around and behind—to ignore the traditional position of the government of Canada toward those who suffer losses over which they have absolutely no control? This was accepted as a national responsibility until the advent of this particular administration. It has been evaded effectively and shamefully since this administration took office under this Prime Minister.

It is time the government began to take a long, hard, practical, progressive look at what is necessary in the face of the rudimentary economic structure of both fishing and agriculture, and developed concepts which will produce health in each industry.

I will not dwell on the fishing problems as they presently exist. However, I will repeat that there has been a totally unrealistic approach in respect to regulations from the water to the can, from the fisherman to the processor, which have been totally unrealistic and which are contradictory to all the practices in a great many other countries