

The Budget—Mr. Lalonde

certainly did go out and did attempt to seek information. The question now before you is whether that was a simple research operation, or was it in fact intended to intimidate and deny the Leader of the Official Opposition the opportunity to exercise his responsibilities as the law requires?

It being four o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to continue with this matter tomorrow.

● (1600)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance) moved:

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government.

He said: My budget today is dedicated to building a strong and growing economy—an economy that will generate lasting, meaningful jobs for all Canadians who want to work, an economy that will provide the economic opportunity and security all Canadians seek.

My budget puts into action the program for growth, opportunity, security and partnership outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

We find ourselves in a markedly improved international and domestic environment. World economic recovery is taking hold. The threats to the financial system have been contained through the close co-operation of governments, the international institutions and the world banking community. Protectionist pressures worldwide remain a potential threat. In this area, as on the financial front, my colleagues and I are working actively with other governments to promote a more stable and more predictable international environment.

On the domestic front the record is impressive by any standard. In the June 1982 budget, my predecessor established the 6 and 5 Program to reduce significantly the inflation that was destroying our economy. That goal has been met. In my April budget, my goal was to secure the recovery. That goal has also been met. Growth has been stronger, inflation lower, and our employment higher than forecast last April. When we compare our economic recovery to that of other countries, Canada is faring better than most. Our economy, growing steadily and surely, is expected to be among the leaders in the industrial nations this year.

These are solid achievements. Yet none of us can be satisfied when more than 1.4 million Canadians—our children, our relatives, our friends and neighbours—want to find jobs and cannot.

[Translation]

BUDGET STRATEGY

My budget is aimed at creating jobs through partnership. The private sector must be the main creator of jobs. But the government can help—by providing assistance where desirable, by lightening the burden of administration where feasible and by leading directly where necessary. Ultimately, the confidence of Canadians—consumers, savers and investors—and the creative energy and entrepreneurship that flow from this confidence, will shape our future.

In my consultations with Canadians in all walks of life and in all regions, I have been encouraged by the sense of realism they bring to our economic and human challenges. There has been a renewal of confidence throughout the country—confidence in our economic potential and confidence in our ability to achieve that potential. At the same time, we increasingly recognize that our future prospects depend, fundamentally, on a strong, co-operative and responsible partnership among Canadians and between Canadians and their governments.

[English]

Today I shall propose new initiatives to strengthen this partnership. Although I shall refer to these initiatives in detail later on, let me indicate the general thrust of some of them.

The accomplishments of the 6 & 5 Program are a remarkable example of what Canadians can do when we all work together. Thanks to the success achieved, we shall, in 1984, be able to maintain our commitment to wage and price restraint but with a more flexible approach.

To secure the jobs we need, we must become more efficient, more productive, and more aggressive in world markets. I shall announce significant measures to improve our productivity and competitiveness, and our ability to export.

The principal generators of jobs in this country are the hundreds of thousands of small and medium-sized businesses.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: I am glad the Conservatives are at long last recognizing this. I shall take steps to ease their administrative burdens by simplifying the tax system. Increasing the economic security of Canadians will strengthen confidence and help boost growth and job creation. I shall propose innovative measures to increase the security of homeowners and I shall announce comprehensive measures to reform the Canadian pension system, including assistance to those in greatest need.

● (1610)

This budget is fiscally responsible. It is designed to provide leadership in moving beyond economic recovery to economic expansion. It will lead us toward growth in incomes and jobs. Most important, it does so by public support to private initiative.

Private initiative depends on confidence. Confidence in turn is fostered by consistency and continuity in government policy.

