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ECONOMIC PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR

In a recent address, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, outlined his conception of some of the responsibilities and objectives of his new portfolio. The following is a partial text of his remarks to the Canadian Club of Toronto:

...It used to be felt that the duty of the Minister of Finance was simply to find the money the Government must necessarily spend to discharge the duties which the constitution and the will of Parliament placed upon it. The classical test applied to his management was to balance the budget. Now we look further and deeper. Our task is to use the powers of Parliament and the Government — through budgeting expenditures and revenues and by legislation and its administration — to guide the economy along in the direction and at the speed that seems best calculated to achieve our economic goals. Those goals have been effectively summarized by the Economic Council of Canada at the beginning of its first annual review, as “full employment — a high rate of economic growth — reasonable stability of prices — a viable balance of payments — and an equitable distribution of rising incomes”.

ROLE OF THE MINISTER

But the role of Government and the Minister of Finance is not simply one of economic management. There are broader social objectives with which our economic goals must be reconciled and within which they must be achieved: to attain for all Canadians greater opportunities and greater equality of opportunity; to help the poor to overcome the disadvantages that tend so often to doom them and their children to continued poverty; to sustain those who are old or

sick or handicapped at standards that are in keeping with what Canadians regard as reasonable. While responsibility for pursuing these social objectives lies mainly with the provinces, the Government of Canada has a share of it. I personally fully support these objectives.

Nor are Canada's policies and moral obligations confined within our borders. Canada has, for the past generation with widespread support from its citizens, taken an active role in international affairs. In carrying forward this role we have used, not only the skill of our diplomats, but also some of our material resources to deal with the problems of substance in the international world. The largest requirement for resources has, of course, been in the field of defence. We must maintain a defence programme if we are to carry a fair share of the burden that falls upon the leading western nations and be taken seriously by our allies in our international role. Increasingly, however, we are also taking an active role in extending aid to the less-developed countries. We do this, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also because we believe that it will help in bringing about the kind of world in which our children and grandchildren can live in peace and prosperity. The Government plans a growing programme in this field of international aid, despite the increasing claim that this must put upon our resources in competition with our own requirements. I am confident that this policy will have the support of a vast majority of the Canadian people.

The Minister of Finance has another primary responsibility. That is to form judgments as to how much of the nation's resources can be devoted to the