

The Budget—Mr. Gray

spending, does it still press for tax reductions that would cost the federal treasury more than \$1 billion?

Mr. Gilbert: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Greenwood is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gilbert: Broadview, Mr. Speaker. I notice that the minister is reading his speech. This is against the rules of the House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gilbert: I wonder whether he would refrain from doing so; otherwise he is violating the rules.

• (9:10 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I appreciate that the practice of the House over a long period has been that hon. members would not read speeches. I do not think the minister is reading his speech; he is referring to his notes. In any event, I would not want to draw any distinction between hon. members on either side of the House. I think if there is any fault here it may lie equally.

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I would confirm I was simply referring to my notes basically to the same extent as the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to ask if the NDP favours the 6 per cent reduction in personal income tax advocated by the Conservative leader and a similar reduction in the corporation taxes proposed by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees). By the way, if the hon. member would like to look at my notes and see my scratches it would be obvious that this is my own speech. My notes would speak for themselves on this point.

Members of this House may wonder whether we should come to the conclusion that both the Conservative and NDP parties have now come around to supporting the Social Credit doctrine of the Cr ditistes as the solution of our economic problems, and I make no comment on the logic of that.

In the weeks and months ahead the three opposition parties may provide to the public of Canada some enlightenment in respect of the policies they jointly propose to resolve our economic problems. They readily condemn the policies of the government but have shown little ability to put forward their own solutions for the people to consider in place of the hodge podge of policies they advocate individually. Therefore, I am confident a majority in this House will be more than willing to support the policies of this government which have been more successful than those of any other nation in halting the dangerous spiral of prices and which have set the stage for the resumption of a stable expansion of production and employment in Canada.

To conclude, may I say that the concern about the present level of unemployment and the slack in the economy is something which I share and which I know the government shares with Canadians generally. I want to assure the House that the government is certainly

[Mr. Gray.]

aware of and is carrying out its responsibility to the people of this country in creating conditions in which there are increasing opportunities for employment and the development of the great potential which is ours as Canadians. I ask this House to vote to approve the motion before it and thereby to approve the budgetary policies of this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. During the course of his remarks the minister indicated that if he had time he would answer questions. He has four minutes left. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield).

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether he can indicate the forecast in real economic growth for the year, and if he is not prepared to do that, as the Minister of Finance has not been prepared to do it, is he prepared to say that 5 per cent or 5½ per cent, which is the minimum rate of growth referred to by the Economic Council, is necessary to keep unemployment from increasing further?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member's question is one which leads to the type of answer he is seeking. He is seeking forecasts which he wants to be able to turn to his own use later on. However, I can say I am optimistic about this country. He does not appear to be, and he should be ashamed of that.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, if I were Minister of National Revenue I would be ashamed to give an answer like that. Can the minister indicate anywhere in the last decade when the number of unemployed in this country between January and February increased by as much as 130,000?

Mr. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I could be mistaken and I stand to be corrected, but I think in my remarks I referred to December 1958, to January 1959.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, I shall not waste the time of the House by reminding members that unemployment has increased by 183,000 in one year—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I understand the hon. member seeks the privilege of asking a question, and I recognize him.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, if you would give me half a second to get my question out I think I could do justice to it. The minister just delivered the most supercilious speech I have ever heard. Having rejected in toto the proposition of the Leader of the Opposition and of our party so far as taxation reductions are concerned, and the reduction in the tax on building materials and the like, I wonder whether he is prepared to offer any consolation to the 668,000 unemployed Canadians who have absolutely no expectation of any improvement in livelihood as a result of the speech of the Minister of Finance today and—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.