

The Budget—Mr. Fortin

tabling the statement which I think would be of interest to hon. members.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, we would prefer that the hon. gentleman table it. I am sure that hon. members who are interested in it would be ingenious enough to find an opportunity in the unabridged question period outside the House to make their views known.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs distributed copies of this statement earlier so that it might be made here rather than outside to the press, we would prefer to revert to motions so he can make the statement now and other members can comment on it.

Mr. Speaker: It appears there is not unanimous consent.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Lotbinière realizes that he would need the unanimous consent and the House has already indicated that there is not unanimous consent.

[English]

In the circumstances, the Chair will have to call orders of the day.

Mr. Baldwin: There is unanimous consent to revert to motions for the purpose of tabling the document, if that is agreeable.

Mr. Speaker: Does the minister have leave of the House to table the document to which he has referred?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 23, consideration of the motion of Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance), that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West), (page 2178).

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I should like to resume and conclude the remarks on the budget which I started yesterday.

In April 1972, the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) tabled an Economic Review designed to restore the fortunes of the government of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). In the first paragraph, on page 7, one can read that even if "demand and production in the Canadian economy have been advancing at a strong space since 1970—higher than in any year since 1966—yet, and I quote:

—in spite of this, the unemployment rate remained high.

This is a clear recognition of the administrative failure of this government. Apparently, it does not understand that the consumers' purchasing power must be increased,

[Mr. Sharp.]

considering Canada's huge power of production. As a comprehensive proof of this assertion, I shall quote another excerpt of this report, to be found at page 7:

A principle source of strength in demand during 1971 as compared to 1970, was in a category of expenditures that may be described as postponable consumer spending. This includes expenditures on durable goods (such as new cars and home furnishings), semi-durable goods (which include clothing and household items like linens and draperies) and new residential construction. Postponable consumer spending increased by \$1.4 billion or almost 12 per cent in 1971.

Mr. Speaker this shows how huge are the consumers' needs and how limited is their purchasing power. It happens that the Canadian people get into debt in proportion. There lies the problem, and nowhere else! Obviously, the purchasing power of consumers must be increased if the national production is to be disposed of. Otherwise, poverty will increase in the midst of plenty.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind the right hon. Prime Minister that on his visit to Victoriaville he stated that the main right of the individual is not the right to work but the right to live decently in his country and that, in any event, machine is replacing man more and more. That means, and this is logical, that the government will have to find the financial mechanism required to ensure a guaranteed income to every Canadian, according to the economic situation, to make up for the inconveniences inflicted by progress.

I find the study of the monetary system fascinating and my colleagues of the other parties should also be fascinated by it. I find it very satisfying as I feel that I am participating actively in a field that is intrinsically related to the common good. It is interesting to see all the intellectual contortions bankers go through to make us accept straight away their monetary system, which is really a clever utopia.

Their intellectual fervor does not keep them from recognizing the existence of a very eloquent situation. Thus, in a brief recently published by the Bank of Canada, the admission is made in a style that is unbelievably technical and monetary, and I quote:

The economic policy of public powers (including the monetary policy) must therefore, to some extent, be applied by trial and error on the basis of insufficient data.

• (1510)

That is the most surprising standard of management in a field as important as that of currency, the economic blood of this country. No wonder that such disorder causes such calamities, including inflation.

The only suitable explanation is that the government is a counterfeiter. I will try to point out the causes of the inflationary upsurge which seems to have taken responsible people by surprise, especially on account of its persistence, and the more so since the fight against inflation in which the government has been engaged for four years was a total failure, and was done at the expense of the small wage earners, the poor and the unemployed.

It is obvious that it will not recognize the real causes of inflation, which seems to have become chronic. It would rather use it as a Trojan horse to win elections. There was a time when one could foresee inflation through an analysis of certain distinctive conditions. It was the lack of