

*The Budget—Mr. Stanfield*

is probably only his stubbornness that accounts for him continuing it for another year. In any event, there can be no doubt about this. The minister's policy of being selective in respect of the economy and his belief in the necessity for increasing unemployment, have surely been effective in the areas of slow growth. These policies have surely been effective in those areas, as these figures we have seen today testify. These are the areas which are most in need of encouragement and they are the areas where the economy is most sensitive to discouragement.

• (3:30 p.m.)

I say that anything positive that has been done by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion in these areas of slow growth has been not only overshadowed but exceeded by this inconclusive program of the Minister of Finance. It is not merely that the unemployment figures on the Prairies are higher than they were a year ago, but that the actual figures for employment are lower. It is not merely that the unemployment figures in the Atlantic provinces are higher than they were a year ago, but that the actual employment figure is down. This indicates very clearly and very statistically that the Minister of Finance has been more effective in creating unemployment in those areas than the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion has been in creating employment in those areas.

Here again, we have an example of two ministers working at cross-purposes to one another. I did not realize that the Minister of Finance was such a hard guy to get along with. I knew he fought with us, but I did not know he fought with everybody else in the government. Here he is pushing a policy which is at loggerheads with the policy of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) and at the same time is making it impossible for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion to discharge his responsibility. The result is that, instead of reducing economic disparity the two ministers together have somehow succeeded in increasing economic disparity in Canada. Now, the Minister of Finance is not proposing just to allow this particular process to continue to increase economic disparity at the present rate; he is not satisfied to go along with more of the same. He wants to increase the pressure on the economy of the country.

Not only is the minister apparently not considering what the United States has been considering for a long time, not only is he not considering simply leaving things the way

they are and letting the Prices and Incomes Commission try to work things out in the existing context for the time being, but rather he has to create more unemployment. Surely with the figures we have in respect of unemployment, not just in the areas of slow growth but across the country, it would have been reasonable for the Minister of Finance to at least have held his hand and said we will wait for a while and see what Dr. Young can do. Yet, the government is deliberately tightening the screws further, is deliberately putting more slack in the economy as well as deliberately creating more unemployment. Surely, this is sadistic. I think actually the white paper itself would be sufficient to slow down the economy if Canadians and others really believed it would be adopted or if it were bulled through and adopted.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance say they are tough. They say they will stand up to pressure. I say not only are they tough but they are stubborn and cold-hearted. I do not want to pick particularly on the Minister of Finance. I say the government is cruel to extract more income taxes from the poor at this time. I say that the government is cruel in treating the aged in this way when they are in need of relief at this time. I say the government is cruel in creating more unemployment at this time.

The government is pursuing a course in respect of the poor, particularly the aged, and the unemployed which would be unthinkable under any other democratic government in the world today. That is the state we have reached. Surely, this is not a just society. It is certainly a slack society in a sense. Surely, at least in the light of the information we now have, the minister will stand up in the House and tell us he does not intend to tighten the screws further. Surely, in the light of these figures, he will not tell us he intends to pursue the program to restrict consumer credit.

I think the minister ought to tell us what he is going to do to relieve unemployment, particularly in the areas of slow growth. I think he should tell us what he proposes to do with regard to the aged and not just fob it off by referring to something that will happen some time in the future. Surely, in a democracy when people are in difficulty it is important that the government show that it has a little concern, a little soul. This is important for our country. I plead with the Minister of Finance to reverse himself. I plead with him