

*The Budget—Mr. Kaplan*

Do we want and can we afford the distinction of being the only country in the world with four national pavilions at Expo 70 in Japan? Much of the criticism of the government is misdirected, but perhaps at federal-provincial conferences the government should be doing more and striking a more urgent tone about this duplication. While the spending admittedly is done by different governments, the money all comes from the same pockets, from the same economy.

A second factor which gives rise to the misconception about the growth of the federal government and government spending, is undeniably the fact that the influence of the federal government is becoming more pervasive in today's life. Many Canadians have a very limited concept of what the role of the government should be, I wish to read another sentence from the letter to which I referred earlier. It reads:

You were not given a mandate by the Canadian people to restructure our economic and social life.

In other words, we were not given a mandate to change society. This concept has very respectable origins. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson had the same idea. They thought the business of the government was to provide services to the people: sell stamps and run the post office protect the merchant marine and the coastline; print money; build public works; provide for a system of justice and serve society with the assumption that society was a static and stable community with a clear idea of what it wanted from the government. Serve society, but don't change it.

The White Paper on Tax Reform has brought this dimension of criticism to a head. If the word of the government is accepted, this tax measure is not designed to raise taxes but to redistribute the burden, shift the wealth and to change society. What business, people ask, does a government have to change the very society which chose it? What is the government doing, interfering with contracts and limiting the freedom of commerce?

• (4:30 p.m.)

The difficulty about the traditional and limited view of the functions of the government is that it depends on assumptions which were true when first accepted but which are false today. Society in the past was stable.

[Mr. Kaplan.]

The economy was in equilibrium. There seemed to be a natural order in human relations. Today, the forces which used to keep order in society have largely disappeared. Women have been emancipated, youth is in revolt, the poor are in revolt, cities are in revolt, the forces of family authority, religion, the class structure, the master-servant relationship are all gone or are becoming steadily weaker. It is clear that order in the past depended upon the suppression of vast segments of society. It was easy to maintain order in a community in which 90 per cent of the people did not seek to improve their situations. Today, segments which were suppressed in the past are insisting upon the recognition of their claims.

What is happening in our cities is an interesting example. People say conditions in the cities have never been worse than they are today. In fact, of course, they have been a great deal worse. Imagine living in 19th Century London, for instance, in a community of more than a million people, crowded together more densely per acre than city dwellers are today, without sewers, without fresh water flowing into their homes, without public transportation, with animals kept in everybody's front and back yards to serve as beasts of burden, without electricity. Imagine the pollution which must have resulted from cooking on fires made with peat, coal and wood. Life in the 19th Century was a great deal worse from this point of view than life in any world metropolis today. Yet, people say conditions have never been worse. The difference is that today no segment of society is prepared to put up with conditions of this sort.

A century or so ago people did not care if their wives and servants were choking in the smoke of the kitchens. The less privileged in society had no means of expressing their views to the government or of bringing about a more equitable social order. The master and servant relationship was strictly imposed. The superiority of the male sex was insisted upon. Domination of the young was taken for granted. Nevertheless, these forces, though they brought stability, did so on the basis of serious injustice. It was law and order without justice, if you like—an attitude which cannot be accepted today.