

*The Budget—Mr. Nystrom*

international forces, but certainly not to the extent of isolating ourselves.

Canada is increasingly becoming one of the great countries of the world, one of the major trading nations, as well as a good neighbour. Economically we should capitalize on our strengths and our good name, to increase our overseas trade with many other countries, developed and developing, while maintaining our traditional trading relations with the United States. And, contrary to some impressions, there are many new opportunities. The poorer countries need our help as they try to survive and industrialize. They are discovering new material and managerial resources of their own. I could cite, for example, Middle East countries and certain Latin American countries. Even better, both sides, developed and developing, are beginning to prefer trade to aid.

In front of the Parliament Buildings there stands a statute of Sir Galahad and on it are inscribed the prophetic words, "If I lose myself, I save myself." I prefer to believe that these words have been inscribed through no coincidence and that they have the ring of truth, a truth which applies to us now. We have seen enough of confrontation and conflict in our time, both here and abroad. Perhaps by working together, by losing ourselves for each other, as we can with voluntary restraint and foreign aid, we shall begin to solve some of our most deep-rooted problems and begin to save ourselves.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) is already running out.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** No, I will be back soon.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Many people of this country say that the budget we are discussing is probably the worst that has been introduced during the seven years I have been a member of parliament.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** There has not been a worse one for a good deal longer than that.

**Mr. Nystrom:** My colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) suggests that there has not been a worse one for a lot longer than seven years. The budget, of course, will bear hard on the working people, the ordinary citizens of Canada. It will aggravate unemployment, increase the rate of inflation, and hit the ordinary Canadian hard. For these reasons I think the Minister of Finance ought to resign.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Guay (St. Boniface):** I thought you were a prospective leader of your party.

**Mr. Nystrom:** I repeat, he should resign. If he cannot take the economy out of its present tailspin, if he cannot create jobs, cannot reduce the inflation rate and help ordinary citizens of this country to live at a better standard, he should resign.

Consider about four or five of the minister's proposals. They are all terribly regressive. He will impose a ten cents per gallon excise tax on gasoline and hurt all people, no matter whether they drive a Cadillac, a Ford or an old

[Mr. Philbrook.]

Pontiac. That tax will literally put many people in this country back on foot. Many will no longer afford the luxury of being able to drive. People all across the country resent this proposal. I know that the people of my riding are furious about the ten cent excise tax on gasoline. The tax will only aggravate our problems. It will also balkanize this country into producing and consuming provinces.

The tax imposes on the taxing powers of the provinces in the field of resources. There was no consultation; it is to be applied unilaterally by Ottawa and will do nothing to unify this country, will do nothing to smooth over feelings that exist as between one part of this country and another.

The budget treats the unemployment insurance plan regressively. Unemployment insurance rates are to go up. This increase is nothing more or less than a disguised tax on the ordinary people of this country and the small businessmen who cannot afford to pass the increased costs on to the consumer.

The Minister of Finance complained that high wages paid in Canadian industries are undermining our ability to compete in the markets of the world. His proposals in this regard would hit heavily the ordinary working people of this country. His proposals are nothing if not regressive.

The Minister of Finance announced a cutback of federal funding in the field of health and medicare. That proposal, too, will hit low income people hardest. The effect is bound to be an escalating increase in the cost of health care. I am sure the members from the Atlantic provinces in particular must be very concerned about that announcement in the budget. These things come down very hard on the ordinary working people.

● (2100)

Look at the omissions. There is nothing for farmers, the average worker, the low or middle income people, or the poor. There is nothing whatsoever to increase the minimum wage, to help the old age pensioner, to help regional disparity, to remove the inequities in this country, and nothing for native people, the Indians and Metis. There is nothing in this budget to remove the inequities between the different groups of people in this country or various regions.

When a government brings down a budget it ought to lead, not abdicate with respect to the economic problems that we have. The Minister of Finance is very fond of saying, "I cannot do much. It depends on the United States. Maybe there will be an upturn in the American economy in the last half of this year." He is abdicating the responsibility he has as Minister of Finance, which is to guide the Canadian economy.

The Minister of Finance is content to pick out certain scapegoats and blame the problems on them. He places the cost of unemployment on the workers by increasing the rate they have to pay to the Unemployment Insurance Commission. He places the additional cost of health and medical care on the provinces. He places the cost of the eastern oil subsidy on the motorists and working people.

This minister shrugs off the responsibility of funding Petro-Canada, which was referred to by the member who spoke previously. Instead he gives more incentives to private oil companies to explore for gas and oil. The time