

The Budget—Mr. Keyes

An Hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: I regret that the Hon. Minister's time has expired. Debate. The Hon. Member for Hamilton West.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I ask your indulgence and that of the House to stray off topic for just a moment. I would like to state for the record that when my Leader announced his decision today, I found myself on a bit of an emotional roller coaster. I felt sad, then I felt a sudden void, and then a feeling of loneliness. Then I was overwhelmed with a sense of pride, pride in the fact that I had the privilege to be a candidate, and then an elected Member of Parliament due in large part to a great Canadian committed to a caring and sharing nation.

I owe the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) a great deal of thanks and wish him and his beautiful family good health, prosperity and only the best for the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I focus specifically on this appalling affront to the Canadian people which the Government refers to as its Budget, I would like to refer to the clear and knowledgeable words of sheer wisdom offered in 1983 by Conservative parliamentarians. They must be asleep. They did not even react to that.

For example, former Deputy Prime Minister Erik Nielsen, speaking on April 19, 1983 stated, "Budget secrecy is a basic principle of our traditions of parliamentary government—it is not a principle that is necessary to defend:—for information about the detailed plans contained in the Budget—to be released prior to the delivery of the Budget in Parliament is, in essence, a contempt of Parliament itself".

Lest you feel that this was just a personal passing whim of one Conservative MP, let me refer to the words of the now Minister of Justice (Mr. Lewis), a man whose wisdom in parliamentary matters I respect. On April 19, 1983, he noted: "It is a breach of Members' privilege that this material, the Budget, was disseminated through the media before it was presented to the House".

He noted further that if the leak was accidental: "The disclosure—in the media is a breach of the Minister's confidentiality—his very privilege".

Mr. Nielsen noted that: "This leaves the Minister the only option of resignation and the production and presentation of a new Budget by a new Minister to be appointed to replace him—"

An Hon. Member: What did he do?

Mr. Keyes: Yes, what did he do? It should not surprise any of us, however, that the current Government chooses to ignore the parliamentary wisdom of its own Members. Clearly, none of its public statements has a life expectancy of more than three months, let alone three years. It willingly disowns its promises, directions and policy statements in the interests of political pragmatism. Therefore, this dubious "Budget-by-press-release" is in contempt of the Canadian public and a breach of democratic ethics in its attack on the most vulnerable citizens of our country and in its complete denial of promises made to obtain a mandate to govern.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Mr. Keyes: A recent *Globe and Mail* editorial boldly claims that the Minister of Finance has become: "the symbol of all the fiscal resolve this Government has been able to muster". I say Amen to that. There is little doubt that the Minister symbolizes the financial fiasco perpetrated upon a distinct Canadian way of life during the past four years and reaching new depths of horror in this Budget. The Hon. Member's budgets do indeed speak to the most abysmal record and appalling failure in fiscal resolve of any government in two decades.

Had the Hon. Member's Budget in 1985 been at all accurate, we would be looking at a deficit of \$24 billion instead of \$31 billion. Had he been at all astute in 1986, we would be paying \$42.5 billion in personal income taxes, not \$50.5 billion. If his claims in 1987 "Plans for Reform" had been fiscally sound, government spending cuts would account for 75 per cent of the reductions in the deficit, instead of the mere 29 per cent now in place. If he had been even close to capable in 1988, the Bank of Canada's lending rate would be 7.8 per cent not 12.6 per cent.

Now the same Minister predicts that this Budget will create further wondrous things, reducing the Bank of Canada rate by 1994 to 7.5 per cent. How are we to believe him now? This huge gap between government projections and promises and the actual public performance and delivery is not surprising to any of us.