

The Budget—Mr. Grafftey

• (4:50 p.m.)

effects of this government's budgets on Canada and its people. Finally, while I recognize that the primary task of a responsible opposition is to oppose, I wish to outline some remedies that I think will in future prevent the mess that our country finds itself in today.

When members of this government sat on the opposition side they advanced economic argument after economic argument. Literally, they ground out speeches from their offices on the fourth floor. They said: When we come to power, we shall have all kinds of planning—indicative planning and classical planning. They also said: We shall introduce a kind of master, five year budget, the sort that we see in France. And we were told there would be interim, annual budgets to straighten out minor problems. But the five year budget would be introduced to gain the confidence of all segments of the Canadian population.

The fact is that we have no stability in this country; we have not had any budgetary planning; in fact, we have not had planning of any kind. Not only members of the N.D.P., who are enthusiastic about the mystique of planning, advocate planning. I say that the economic mess this country is in today has been brought about through lack of planning.

Mr. Caouette: Two budgets a year.

Mr. Grafftey: I think it is three.

Mr. Caouette: There will be one every week, next year.

Mr. Grafftey: The Prime Minister has lunged from one extreme to the other in his approaches to the problem. Let us consider the first minister of finance of this administration, Mr. Speaker. He was the daring innovator, the experimenter par excellence. He rushed in where angels feared to tread. In many ways one had to admire the guts of this emancipated gladiator in flight, who was often emancipated from any consideration of the lessons of the past.

What did that minister of finance do? He advanced; he withdrew; the rule book was thrown into the grandstand and he became the first of many promising rookies to be benched by a dumbfounded and confused coach. The coach finally lost confidence in this kind of "be damned with the past" philosophy, only to adopt an equally invalid approach.

At a time when modern economic, monetary and fiscal problems demanded imaginative and daring leadership he opted for an approach perhaps suited the problems of the 'fifties but woefully inadequate to meet the challenge of the 'sixties and 'seventies; he opted for the darling of the mandarin establishment, the present stand pat status technician, who likes nothing better than to keep the pot boiling with three budgets per annum.

As Alice in Wonderland observed: "It is dreadfully confusing to play croquet when there are no rules." To quote again from Lewis Carroll:

The players all played at once without waiting for turns, quarrelling all the while and fighting for the hedgehogs, and in a very short time the queen was in a furious passion.

There is no doubt about the confusion and the furious passion created by this budget, and there is no doubt that this is a wonderland. We have sat here on the opposition benches in great wonderment, watching first of all the hedgehog activity of the government when it first took office, bringing out a budget and then withdrawing it. Now, we watch while another player wants to take three turns in a row and bring down three budgets in one year. While it may be wonderful, it is still dreadfully confusing and there are still no rules—and there will not be any rules until we have a change of government. Three factors have helped to create the mess this country is in today—the lack of short term or long term planning on the part of the government; its refusal as mentioned by our leader, to plan federal priorities and priorities with the provinces, and its appalling record of confusion in bringing down budgets.

What about the effect on Canada and on the Canadian people? What is the situation in our country today? By its ill-conceived fiscal economic and monetary management the government has destroyed its options of manoeuvre—options which are necessary if we are to face the present economic situation. This has been said before, but it must be said time and time again, because it is of the essence in the decision making functions of cabinet government.

Second, we are faced with rampant inflation involving an unprecedented increase in the cost of living. Interest rates are at record heights. Exports are dwindling. Though the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports that