

The Budget—Mr. Nesbitt

The farmer is entitled to the cost of production plus a reasonable profit. He is entitled to his fair share of the retail prices.

The inroads of the conglomerate are only beginning to be felt in Canadian agriculture today. We must not allow a situation to develop in Canada as it did in California where, by 1969, 3.6 per cent of the farmers owned 70 per cent of the agricultural land. It is not in the national interest to allow thousands of farmers to be driven out of business and have market control gathered into the lap of conglomerate power. We continually talk about public interest and social efficiency in the interest of the community as a whole. Surely, there can be no greater public interest than our interest in food supplies.

• (1710)

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, when I first looked at the budget presented by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) the other evening, I was reminded of my days in high school many years ago. There were various books I had to study. Most were a disagreeable green, drab grey or brown colour, but the algebra book was a bright, shiny red. It was usually designed in a way that would conceal the disagreeable contents. It was a bit of a delusion. I could not help but compare the minister's budget with that algebra book. On the face of it, one noticed the very substantial increase in the supplementary payments under the Old Age Security plan. With that, everyone in this House agrees and congratulates the minister on having the good judgment and good sense to accept not only the advice of opposition parties in this House in the past few years, but the various senior citizens groups across the country. However, after that, we begin to see the real contents of the budget.

Let us look at the Old Age Security escalator clause. It will be retroactive to the first of the year. That is fine. However, as I pointed out in this House earlier today, that amounts to \$2.88 a month. A few years ago in this House, a previous Minister of Finance, who is no longer with us but retired shall we say, increased the old age pension. He was referred to as "Two buck Harris". This \$2.88 a month increase amounts to approximately 10 cents a day, not even enough for a cup of coffee. Last weekend, one of my constituents referred to the Minister of Finance as "Ten cent Turner". This may not be polite, but at least it is accurate.

As has been pointed out by nearly every speaker, other than those on the government side, while the minister stated that the personal income tax as such was not being touched, there was a sort of error of omission. In fact, the personal income tax will be increased by 3 per cent at the end of this year. I think the budget was very deceptive in this regard. I have heard a number of people refer to it as the "Tricky Turner Treatment".

The next item in the budget is the estimated \$500 million tax advantages and incentives to industry. To some degree, this is very good. However, the minister missed one point. He did not state whether any of this would be passed on to the taxpayers. That remains to be seen. I suspect it will not be passed on. The minister stated he has great trust and faith in business to use these incentives to purchase new machinery and pass on the benefits.

[Mr. Stafford.]

I have here a letter which was given to me by one of my colleagues. It is a circular letter dated May 8, 1972 from AOCO Limited of Belleville, Ontario, which apparently has a virtual monopoly in the field of spectacle lenses, rims and other things associated with eyeglasses. The letter reads:

TO OUR GOOD CUSTOMERS: Enclosed you will find our new Rx and Stock Price Lists which supersedes all previous lists and becomes effective May 15th, 1972.

Labour and material costs have increased rapidly over the past twelve months and, in order to maintain the high quality of our products, our price list reflects these increases.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your valued business in the past and we trust we may continue to service your requirements.

There is a footnote which reads:

Regarding the above, you may expect a notice regarding price change on or about May 15th, 1972,—

In the past few weeks and months, a great many people have been guessing about the election date. No one has come up with a very good answer. Apparently this company was very good at guessing not only the budget date, but the contents of the budget because the price increases were to become effective the very day the budget was presented. I am sure it was a coincidence, but there it is. If this is any example of how some of the major business firms in this country are going to behave, I hope the minister will ensure that these tax benefits will not be granted until such time as there is an indication that business is going to use them in the way which the minister indicated. I agree that many businesses in this country have high business standards and will carry out the minister's ideas, but there are a great many in every industry and profession who are not so highly motivated and need watching. I hope the minister will take appropriate steps in this regard.

The main subject I want to deal with today is something which the minister has omitted. Other of my colleagues have dealt with or will be dealing with other aspects of the budget. In addition to omitting any reference to personal income tax, either reductions or increases, the minister omitted any reference to foreign investment. Shortly before the minister presented his budget, one of his colleagues presented the so-called government policy on foreign investment. I will not go into the details of that because everyone in this House and most Canadians are aware of how great an announcement that was and how much it did or did not do. Just after the foreign investment announcement was made, I remarked to one member on the government side that there was not much in that. He said "Just wait until the budget, then you will see something. There is really going to be something in the budget." That was not a very good guess because there was not anything in the budget concerning foreign investment or any allusion to it.

Whether one likes it or not, this question of foreign ownership, foreign control and foreign investment in Canada is a big issue. I agree that many Canadians are concerned about it for the wrong reasons, but the fact is people are concerned. There are some very good reasons to be concerned about the question of not only foreign investment, but the type and degree of foreign investment in Canada. Likewise, there are great differences of opin-