

The Budget—Mr. Stanfield

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: You refused to pass it.

Mr. Stanfield: Oh, poor fellow! Surely he has not forgotten all about that. They dissolved parliament. They left on the order paper the most prized objectives of the Minister of Finance in 1972. Surely the Prime Minister has not forgotten that. I can also appreciate that the Prime Minister might feel some distress at the prospect of entering the record book as the leader of the only government in the country's history to have been defeated on a budget. As much as I resist most temptations to be partisan myself, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that no administration more richly deserves that honour.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister gave us yesterday evening a new example of the electoralism that he does not hesitate to use to get more votes at the expense of national unity, like during the campaign of 1968 for instance. Before the beginning of the campaign, I wish to tell him immediately, Mr. Speaker, that we will see to it that people from Quebec, like all other Canadians, not be taken in by his little game that consists in passing off Progressive Conservatives as francophobes.

The Prime Minister usually makes peculiar kinds of speeches but last evening he broke with tradition and delivered a rather funny one. He has proven only one thing, but it is a certainty, he is more expert in sarcasm than in economic matters.

I shall only tell him and his colleagues that if I exert myself to speak the second language, it is because I have the honour to be the Leader of a party which, a long time ago and even before the present Liberal government, took many measures to promote equal status for both official languages in Canada. I wish only to remind the Prime Minister of the situation of the French language and the status of French-speaking civil servants in this country prior to 1957 and after 22 years of Liberal administration.

My party committed itself officially to the respect and promotion of bilingualism. The people from Quebec know that and I am sure that they appreciate what I do to understand them and be understood by them. So, I shall not let the Liberal party wave the spectre of racism for electoral purposes and thwart our common efforts towards unity.

Here is another tactic I consider petty, which the Prime Minister used last night and against which I should like to warn Canadians. The Prime Minister would have us believe that whoever is not a Liberal in Quebec is a mercenary in the pay of the other parties. That is a lie! A monumental lie, and an insult to the intelligence of Quebecers. And the government members, for a few weeks still, will be surprised to see, when the next election comes, that there are many Quebecers of good will, among whom even some Liberals, who will join force with us to put an end, once and for all to the federal Liberal hegemony in Quebec.

Let the government put an end to its partisan foolishness, let it seek to justify its administrative carelessness and economic clumsiness, rather than exploit prejudices and stir Canadians one against the other. The mountebank

[*Mr. Stanfield.*]

pronouncements of the Prime Minister cannot make the Canadian forget, and Quebecers no more than the others, the problems and hardships his government brought upon them.

● (1700)

[*English*]

The Minister of Finance referred to the budget as a responsible budget. I think I know what he was trying to say. He means that as a thing unto itself, as an illustration in a textbook, it could be viewed as an academically responsible illustration of how country "X" represents its sums. The addition and subtraction are of adequate quality, and many of the ways and means motions relating to ongoing tax reform remain consistently as unintelligible as their predecessors. A country with no great inflation problem, no chronic distress among its working people, particularly its working poor, and a population that delighted in seeing personal tax revenue jump by \$1.5 billion in a single year—any such country in these circumstances might want to consider it as a model for a budget.

It is interesting to note that the Minister of Finance referred to his last budget of one year ago as responsive and to his present one as responsible. There is a difference, as the minister well knows, and in the reality of conditions existing in Canada today the minister's change in terms constitutes an admission of his failure to produce anything that is truly responsive to this country's economic needs. Canada wants leadership to join in the attack on inflation. Nothing less than that would be responsive to the need. The Progressive Conservative Party has committed itself to offering that leadership, and in government we will implement a program which will do just that.

I want to make it abundantly clear that I will not accept, either in opposition or in power, if power is conferred upon me, the continuance of what has been done to the people of Canada by the rate of inflation which has taken place in this country. Of course there is no simple solution, but I defy the Minister of Finance, I defy the Prime Minister and I defy the Secretary of State for External Affairs to show any inconsistency in the position I have taken or in anything I have said.

We need a short-term period of controls for one main purpose. We are not going to solve the problem of inflation—

An hon. Member: That will not solve anything.

Mr. Stanfield: —but the program can destroy or can certainly be very effective in reducing inflationary expectations in this country. There is no ambiguity in what I say. I have not departed from the principle of a very short-term freeze and, after the freeze has ended, of flexible regulations or flexible controls for between 18 months and 2 years.

From its dungeon of bankruptcy, the government party wails, "It will not work." If it will not work, why is it in the government's contingency plan? Why do all political parties in Britain, including the British Liberal Party, support a policy of controls and an incomes policy?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): They have a great economic record.