

The Budget—Mr. Nasserden

gentlemen opposite demonstrated their illegitimate claim to the responsibilities of government. They still retain the old arrogance. The Minister of Finance is a living embodiment of that arrogance. Instead of coming clean with the Canadian people and with parliament the minister hedges, hoping a fractured gesture will serve a wholesome purpose.

I would ask you, sir, if the situation is of the magnitude that the minister has outlined on more than one occasion, and as indicated by every factor in the field of business today, why does he not remove the sales tax entirely? I cannot help but feel that the budget, therefore, is another monument to carelessness. It is an arrogant denial of responsibility. This debate can serve some useful purpose if it puts an end to the careless, divided administration opposite. It would then give Canadians a purpose and restore a new respect for the institutions that we have here in Canada.

I remember vividly how the Minister of Finance was in the vanguard of those who bore the banners of shame and degradation during the devaluation crisis. Day after day he was one of those who brought into question the integrity of Canada. I remember those repeated false claims fraudulently, arrogantly, carelessly and deliberately uttered by the front bench opposite. They were not content to destroy—

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Nasserden:—confidence in Canada, but they took their purpose to the other nations of the world as well, in the international field.

Mr. Sharp: Can I ask the hon. member a question? Since these are very serious charges that he is making, can I ask if he would document these charges against me in this respect?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Order, please.

Mr. Nasserden: I wonder whether the minister could wait until I have completed my remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): The hon. member wishes to ask that any questions be put when he has terminated his speech.

Mr. Nasserden: I remember that period. I remember that election campaign. I remember how members opposite gave birth to that

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illegitimate founding, the truth squad. During the debate the minister has said that they never questioned the necessity for devaluation.

Mr. Sharp: That is right.

Mr. Nasserden: Why did you use the term "Diefendollars"? The minister ought to know that history has a way of catching up. At this particular time it has certainly caught up with this government. The Minister of Finance, the Minister of Transport, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Prime Minister all cast doubts on Canada's future. Every one of them said that with the devaluing of the dollar Canada did not have a future. Today, without generosity, without any apparent twinge of conscience, they would have us believe that they had something to do with the expansion and development that took place in this country from 1961 to 1965.

Mr. Sharp: Government policy since 1963.

Mr. Nasserden: I say to you, sir, that that expansion was well on the way before this government ever took office. I need not call witnesses in this regard. Indeed, I say to you without fear of contradiction that the expansion has taken place despite the impediments that have been the issue of this unhappy government opposite.

Mr. Sharp: We have done very well.

Mr. Nasserden: The minister has exhibited some pride in the health of our economy today. I say to him that it is a false pride without substantial foundation.

Mr. Sharp: Who is running down the country now?

Mr. Nasserden: First of all, the minister and the government opposite have only complicated the economic life of this nation since coming to office. Second, inflation today is rampant in this country, robbing our people of the purchasing power of their dollar. This inflation is a direct result of the poorly considered, ill-conceived measures which were the results of the labours of the present government.

It would also seem, sir, that the government embarked upon a program designed to create a high cost economy as soon as it assumed office. Members of the government have been eminently successful in that regard. The cost of living in Canada is at an all-time high. Consumer credit, which was