

What is required is a decisive expansion of the role played by the federal government in planning and directing the Canadian economy. Private or corporate power is not meeting the needs or possibilities that we have as a people. It is absolutely essential that the national government assume the leading role in determining all of our economic and social priorities. In the long run the selective and strategic use of public investment, public ownership, and government expenditure must be at the core of any national development plan, the ultimate objective of which is to achieve full employment and to hold under control escalating inflation. We must get beyond the boom and bust cyclical nature of the Canadian economy, and only national economic planning can achieve this kind of objective.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, only the New Democratic Party is committed to such a policy for Canada. With this budget the Liberals have once again demonstrated that they are a party of indifference, of unemployment and of inequality, a party that is wedded to the foolish, cruel, and unjust economic ideas of the past which they still continue to apply to the present.

I want to move an amendment to the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles):

That the amendment be amended by changing the period at the end thereof to a semi-colon, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words:

"this House also regrets the gross injustice of the disguised and regressive tax on every working man and woman in Canada involved in higher premiums for unemployment insurance, as well as the serious injustice of the federal government's unilateral decision to renege on its commitments to the provinces in respect of the cost of hospital and medical services".

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) for the courage he showed in delivering his speech on a budget that is far from meeting the needs of Canadians and offers no valid solution to the major problem of price inflation and unemployment in general.

The Minister of Finance told the House that preparing this budget was no easy thing, and that is understandable, especially in view of the old tools available to him to meet the monetary needs of this country.

During the last election campaign, the Liberal government asked the people of Canada to give it a majority so it could form a strong team to meet the many problems—especially inflation and unemployment. A majority government, they said, would give this country economic stability and prosperity for all Canadians.

On May 6, 1974, the Minister of Finance had brought in a budget involving much more realistic elements of solution than the budgets of November 1974 and June 23, 1975. However—and it should be noted—that was at the time under the direction of a minority government, so he had to be wiser and show competence to secure the confidence of the people in face of an eventual general election.

Too bad, Mr. Speaker, that the government is no longer in a minority position. Canada would be better off. The proof is there. Mr. Speaker, this government is the docile servant of economic dictatorship. High finance is in con-

The Budget—Mr. A. Lambert

trol, dictates the policies to be followed, and that has always been done on the basis of the profits to be made without any consideration for the small or average people who must suffer.

Economists prepared all sorts of plans and schemes that were tried out by this government and only gave poor results. One does not have to be very intelligent to succeed as well as with the formulas of our learned economists who direct our economy from periods of inflation to periods of unemployment, from periods of economic crises and hardship to periods of abundance.

● (1700)

It seems the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) understood because he said in his speech that the economy of our country is too important to be left in the hands of economists.

Useful political decisions are the only alternative, and I agree with that. It is then the responsibility of Parliament, that is the highest authority in our country, to legislate to regain control over our economy and bring the economic dictatorship to heel.

Last year, the Chairman of the Board of the Bank of Montreal said essentially the same thing as the Minister of Finance about the inflation problem. He said that it was time to take the bull by the horns and that only the elected representatives had the authority required to deal with that price inflation problem.

The minister seems to get over it too easily by saying that the situation of the economy in the United States is even worse than ours and that unemployment there is 2 per cent higher. Obviously, the economic situation is not better in the United States. They have exactly the same financial system and it gives the same results: public debts are increasing as well as debt service and it is the same for taxes.

I have here a quotation from an article published in the newspaper *La Presse* of Montreal in April 1972 and that is very informative. The newsman says and I quote:

Today the wealthiest country in the world is penniless. Last year the American economy passed the \$1 trillion mark but the municipalities of twenty-one major cities do not have enough money to pay their policemen, their firemen, their teachers and their street sweepers.

And he says a little further:

The economic stagnation and the increase in the unemployment index did not prevent prices from rising and inflation from continuing. In order to revive the economy, the president presented three deficit budgets: \$80 billion in three years. Those measures and other monetary and fiscal improvisations did not preclude the vertiginous degradation of public services.

And he concludes with the following:

Their leaders do not know what to do next.

Municipal and state administrators and the president himself are in the same situation.

Where do we find the money to close those gaps? By increasing public debt? But the annual payment of the interests already amounts to \$12 billion and represents the third largest public expense after defense and social security.

That looks a lot like what we have here.

The president, the governor, the mayor who would consider it would be sure to be wiped out like a straw in the wind come next election day.