

The Budget—Mr. Darling

otherwise would have been this year. If this same family has an income of \$8,000, the total tax reduction will be \$141, or 13 per cent.

As the Minister of Finance said, another way of looking at the effect of these cuts in taxation is to note that a married wage earner with two young children living in any one of the provinces will pay no federal income tax until his income goes above \$4,473. Therefore, looking at the 1973-74 fiscal year, Canadian consumers will have available to them an additional \$1.3 billion through this reduction in personal income tax. Seventy per cent of this will be in the hands of the majority of Canadian taxpayers—those with an income of less than \$10,000. Consumers who are old age pensioners will also benefit from the increase in the basic old age security pension to \$100 monthly.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude, I think it is clear that the reductions proposed by the Minister of Finance of sales tax and customs duties as well as the other budget measures—particularly the cut in personal income tax and the increase in the old age pension—will prove and are already proving to be of worth-while benefit to the Canadian consuming public. These measures will help the Canadian economy and at the same time will constitute a countervailing force against inflationary pressures. Therefore, I urge the House to support this budget to ensure that its benefits are in fact available to every Canadian consumer.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, at long last, after listening to my colleagues on this side and to other members I have a chance to say a few words. This is my maiden speech, Mr. Speaker, so I would like to begin by congratulating Your Honour on your appointment for another term to the post of Speaker of the House. I would also like to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) on his appointment as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees of the Whole House.

May I at this time say I am proud to represent the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka and to have been selected to follow Mr. Gordon Aiken, Q.C., who was an outstanding member of this House for 15 years.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: He served unstintingly in the House until he was forced to retire because of ill health, and I know his many friends here will join with me in wishing him a complete return to health. As an aside, Mr. Speaker, I had a letter from him today and he is enjoying the best health he has had for the past 20 years.

• (2030)

I should like to say a few words about my constituency of Parry Sound-Muskoka. I am sure that many members of this House have been to my region at one time or another and those who have not been so fortunate have heard of the area. My riding is without doubt the finest tourist area in this great Dominion of Canada. This certainly must be so, Mr. Speaker, as more members of this House visit my riding during the summer months than visit all other ridings combined. I might say that one of

[Mr. Gray.]

our visitors is His Excellency the Governor General. Tourism is our biggest industry. This can be very good when an area has a strong attraction as a tourist paradise because it brings in people from far and wide. They bring with them not only money but new faces, good will and companionship. The chances are they will enjoy themselves and will tell others. Many of them will build in our area and add to the vitality and prosperity of our region.

These are serious times for our country, Mr. Speaker, and I share the concern expressed by my colleagues who have spoken in the past few days on this budget. These are times that call for leadership and for decision. These are times that call for courage. For that reason I was disappointed, both for myself and for my constituents, at the lack of real evidence in the budget that our country is getting leadership or decision from this government. The only evidence of courage in the budget is the indication that this government is prepared at last to accept some of the recommendations of the official opposition.

I realize that it would have taken courage of a very high order for the present government to bring down a budget that would satisfy the people of Canada rather than the NDP. However, I realize also that it was more expedient, politically, for the government to enter into an arrangement with the NDP in order to prolong its stay in power. This is all the more difficult to accept, Mr. Speaker, and is all the more distasteful when you recall that the official opposition is on record as having told the government that it need not fear defeat so long as it brought down legislation that was meaningful.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) did not offer any deals and he did not propose any arrangements in exchange for personal reward. It was a straightforward announcement of purpose. The government was told that as long as it made a serious effort to govern responsibly and showed signs that it was prepared to grapple with such problems as inflation and unemployment, we in the opposition would act just as responsibly.

It is easy to sit back and criticize. I served as the head of a small municipal government for over a quarter of a century before coming to Ottawa as a new member. Criticizing for the sake of opposing is not good enough. During my campaign I emphasized certain things as priorities which I hoped would be included in the budget, and I thank the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) for those things which were included. The top priorities in my area are, first and foremost, the high cost of living caused by spiralling inflation and the great need for increases in old age pensions for the elderly and many others living on fixed incomes who are hardest hit by inflation.

While the budget does provide some relief for the people in my area, the top priority, to my way of thinking, for the people in rural Canada is to find a way to stop spiralling inflation and the high cost of living. This can only be done by the kind of wage and price freeze suggested by my party earlier in this debate. A great many people in the rural parts of Canada are living on low and fixed incomes. Therefore, they are hardest hit in endeavouring to make their income dollars stretch. This is not the case in the great metropolitan areas where the highest wages are paid and where the great unions are able to demand,