

The Budget—Mr. Gordon

sales tax situation. I hope he goes all the way and removes this tax on production entirely.

I have described this budget as a stopgap budget and I am sure the people of Canada agree. But it is a budget which contains many contradictions. On one hand the minister tells us to spend. In the next breath, he says: Don't spend. He calls for exports, yet he restricts credit to the primary producers who do most of the exporting. He tells us to save, yet he reduces the reasons for saving.

In conclusion, I would say this: While pension plans of various kinds are excellent, the minister must recognize that these developments in our society create a psychological effect in the minds of the individuals concerned. If they are to be taken care of in their senior years they will not worry about spending too much money today.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Hon. Walter L. Gordon (Davenport): As this is the first time I have spoken during the present session I should like to begin by congratulating Your Honour, and the Deputy Speaker, on your new and important posts. I would also like to congratulate all hon. members on their choice of a Speaker for this house. In the way he has directed our proceedings, especially during some regrettably stormy periods, the Speaker has given clear evidence that our choice was an exceedingly happy one. We respect his decisiveness and quick firmness, and we appreciate his good humour and his pleasant smile when he delivers his rulings. I am sure all hon. members will agree when I say we are grateful to the Speaker for what he has done, and will do for us, but more importantly for what he is doing for the institution of parliament.

Some hon. members know that when I resigned from the government I resolved to make no speeches in or out of the house for a period of six months. I still have about a month to go but I am breaking my self-imposed vow of silence today, and only for today, in order to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) on his appointment as my successor, and to compliment him on his budget.

It seems to me the debate has opened on a rather high note and I congratulate the previous speakers, particularly the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Monteith) and the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Cameron), both of whom made excellent speeches this morning from somewhat different points of view. My mischievous friend,

[Mr. Leboe.]

the mellowing firebrand from Vancouver Island, has a caustic wit that is always refreshing, and sometimes he says some intelligent things that are worth listening to. But I had a little trouble following him this morning when he referred to my panache, which my particular dictionary refers to as a plume of feathers, especially a headdress. If by inference he was inviting me to join his particular band of fighting Indians, I shall think the matter over carefully, but I seem to remember that when I was a minister I felt that he and his band of Indians would have preferred to have eaten me if they had not thought I was too old and tough.

Mr. Speaker, the present minister for several years was a senior member of the staff of the Department of Finance and it must have given him great pleasure to return to head his old department. The job has its difficulties, at times, but also its satisfactions, and I am sure he will find the work is fascinating.

The minister has an excellent staff to help him. The deputy minister is the dean of the Canadian civil service. He is a wise and imaginative man who has served successive governments with loyalty, integrity, and complete discretion. Mr. Bryce is surrounded by a well-knit team of keen and able people who are competent to grapple with extremely complex issues, and I wish all of them, and their minister, the very best of luck.

It must have given the minister some feeling of relief, as well as of pleasure, to have presented his first budget. As one who has had some experience with a first budget I wish to say to him that if he is satisfied that his proposals are sensible in the light of present conditions he should not become overly disturbed if he receives a few criticisms.

After all, his critics, and he is bound to have a few, may not have the same facilities as are available to the Minister of Finance to assess the current situation, which puts them at something of a disadvantage. And I doubt if very many of them would have given as much concentrated thought over the last three or four months to the kind of policies that are called for in present circumstances, as did the minister.

I do not wish to suggest that the minister's critics will necessarily be all wrong, or that the minister will necessarily be all right in all of his points of view. There are no absolutes in this business.