

The Budget—Mr. Sevigny

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Then I record that there was unanimous consent and that the table should be printed at the point mentioned by the hon. member for Laurier in the course of his speech.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I do not believe it is the practice in this house for such a request to be formally put. The house indicates its consent in a general way. That has been the practice. It is not necessary, I take it, for the Speaker to put the motion formally.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think the Chair has made the point very clear. If the Chair is putting the question more formally now it is because there was doubt as to whether or not the matter was clear previously. The incident is closed.

(Translation):

Hon. Pierre Sevigny (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, for the last 30 minutes, we have heard the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) criticize the policy of the Conservative government. Before I get down to the gist of the matter, I should like to single out certain remarks made by the hon. member about the decennial census, and most particularly about the statement made in the house yesterday by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Hees).

I thank my excellent friend, the hon. member for Laurier for the kind words he had for the government and the Minister of Trade and Commerce, concerning the attitude taken on that matter. Had he confined his remarks to the congratulations he addressed to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, I think his comments would have been much more appreciated than the rest of his speech, because the latter part of his remarks clearly reveals the Liberal opposition's spite against the government's attitude, such spite being provoked by the fact that the Liberal opposition, wishing to follow its well known tradition of dividing in order to better rule, was deadly intent on making a political football of that census question.

It is indeed unfortunate for the election purposes of our friends opposite that this political football should have exploded, but it is certainly preferable for national unity that our country should be led by a government which, because it is anxious to find the truth and to achieve the purpose of that census, should have decided to consult experts on the matter, so that the formula submitted to our people might be one based on scientific and accurate data. I repeat it is unfortunate that our friends opposite should

[Mr. Fleming (Eglinton).]

have wished to arouse public opinion about that matter and tried to resort to it for election purposes, but it is certainly desirable for national unity in Canada that the matter should have been settled along the lines suggested by the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, these last few days, I have listened carefully and with a certain amount of surprise to the statements made by our hon. friends of the opposition about the steps suggested by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming) in the supplementary budget he introduced in the house in December last. That budget was prepared by the minister after lengthy studies of the economic circumstances prevailing across the country, and after detailed and toilsome consultations with financiers, industrialists and leading businessmen across the nation, as well as after consultation with representatives of the professions and labour organizations. That budget, so carefully prepared was well received generally across the country, and the opinion of our fellow citizens was reflected in the many editorials we have read both in our daily newspapers and in our weeklies and which, for the most part, commended the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, that budget was not easy to prepare, because it had to include short term provisions in order to maintain the present momentum of the Canadian economy. Long term provisions had also to be introduced, whose benefits will be felt in years to come.

On the other hand, care had to be taken not to indulge in those ultra-socialistic excesses recommended by the Liberal party in the platform it submitted to its followers at its recent rally, the result of which would be to destroy our economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear enough that this budget was studied carefully by the members of the opposition, and it is clear enough also that they approve it in great part, and for many reasons.

I should like to say first that the congress committee established to study measures to meet the unemployment situation existing among our mighty neighbours to the south, the American people, suggested to the U.S. authorities measures identical to those we have considered ourselves to help the unemployed of this country.

If those measures which we adopted without any prior consultation with our neighbours to the south meet their approval, it is a sufficiently clear indication that they are efficient to some degree and that they are considered as serious by people who know about such things.