

The Budget—Mr. Olson

budget in my speech. I am going to do that, Mr. Speaker, or at least partially deal with some matters, but not until I have said a word or two about the amendment and the subamendment that have been moved. I wonder whether the hon. member for Perth and the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot (Mr. Ricard) who moved and seconded the amendment did so with tongue in cheek because the amendment says:

This government has failed miserably to set an example of responsibility by its refusal to reduce taxation, by its reckless increase in governmental expenditures—

I also wonder whether the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who moved and seconded the subamendment, did so with tongue in cheek when they subscribed to most of the amendment and injected some specific ways in which taxes ought to be reduced.

Mr. Knowles: We cut out a lot.

Mr. Olson: I know what you cut out and I know what is left. You cut out the reference to "an example of responsibility by its refusal to reduce taxation," etc. and added something else. The reason I mention this at this time is that I cannot take the amendment and subamendment seriously because every time last session that there was a proposal before the house to increase federal expenditures the spokesmen for both those parties not only endorsed those expenditures but almost invariably said, "It is not enough; there should be more." To be kind, I think their attitude is just a little hypocritical and I do not think we can take amendments of this kind seriously after the performances we have seen.

Turning now to the minister's speech I would like to ask him to give us some good reasons why he brought in the budget at this time because amendments to income and corporation taxes apparently must await further study of the report of the Carter royal commission. That study has been going on for almost six years. Surely the minister is not prepared to admit that he, his advisers and his party are so bankrupt of ideas for overhauling the tax structure of Canada that they could not at least have brought in something in the budget to make a start on overhauling the tax structure.

The minister also said that all tariff changes will await further study and consideration of the Kennedy round of trade negotiations. I can agree with him that some

additional time may be required to consider the results of that round of negotiations which concluded recently. But I return to the original question. Why bring in a budget which in essence says we are going to postpone tax amendments and tariff changes? Even one of the two tax changes that the budget did introduce, the removal of the sales tax on drugs, will not take effect until September 1, three months from now.

In presenting this budget I think the minister has left the Canadian economy and Canadian business in an even more uncertain position than before it was introduced. The minister has told the country that there is a future possibility of a large number of income tax changes. However, he did not say when they would be introduced. Will certain kinds of business enterprises be postponed waiting for these changes? These changes may deal with capital costs and may deal with income tax rates, both personal and corporate. As a result there is much more uncertainty than prevailed before the budget speech was made. Other than the tradition of introducing a budget once a year I cannot see any reason why the minister introduced this kind of budget.

Mr. Knowles: It wasn't a budget; it was a sermon.

Mr. Olson: I agree it was a sermon or lecture, whichever you like to call it, but along with that the minister should have made specific proposals or should have waited until he was ready to make such proposals. I should now like to turn to another subject for a moment.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I was just going to ask the hon. member whether he liked my sermon or the sermon of the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I was about to deal with that. As a matter of fact I liked both sermons, but I am also in some disagreement with both. Concerning the sermon delivered by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands respecting the persecution, discrimination and other inhuman treatment meted out to the Jews and Arabs over the generations, I should like to say that I was to a large measure in agreement with what he said in so far as the history of the matter is concerned. I must say, however, that I was also a little disturbed by his conclusion and where he laid the blame for the perpetuation of this problem, because I heard him say