

The Budget—Mrs. MacInnis

What does this kind of budget mean? What will we be faced with as a result of the budget? Put briefly—others of my colleagues have dealt with this question at greater length—it means that this government is leaving the private sector of the economy free to continue to expand and to make larger profits regardless of the value to the public of that expansion. At the same time, government services such as health and welfare, assistance to education, pollution control and many other very necessary and essential services of value to the public are going to be restricted. That is what the policies contained in the budget are designed to do.

In the second place, this budget will bring on increased unemployment. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) said this was so in his budget speech and the most recent unemployment figures confirm it right up to the hilt. I do not know whether even the minister is prepared for the rapidity with which unemployment is increasing and is likely to increase. Here is the proof that unemployment is not an accident; that the minister's policies are designed for that purpose. I should like to refer to a clipping from the *Globe and Mail* that deals with some remarks made by the Minister of Finance outside the House. In addition to other unpleasant and unusual habits, the government has developed the habit of making its most important policy statements outside the House to the media without giving the members of the House the benefit of hearing them within these walls. Speaking to the Canadian Press on March 16, the Minister of Finance is reported to have said:

Unemployment slightly higher than that of 1969 may be necessary "if we are really going to beat inflation"—

His comment was made on a public affairs television program taped for broadcast yesterday.

"I certainly hope the steps we are taking will mean that unemployment won't be concentrated as it has been in the past in certain areas of Canada," Mr. Benson said.

"We are certainly taking all the steps we can to help areas in eastern Canada and eastern Quebec where unemployment is high."

The things the government has been doing to help—and I put the word "help" in quotes—are the very things that are causing unemployment and will continue to cause unemployment to increase in this country. I say this because the policies contained in the budget will mean increased unemployment. They will mean more lay-offs, just as there have been increasing lay-offs in the public

service. They will mean lay-offs in private industry, too. This past week unemployed rubber workers in one of the big plants near Toronto visited Ottawa. People are being laid off in industry after industry, yet the government feels there is no responsibility on its shoulders to do anything concrete or worth while to correct the situation. This is why unemployment is mounting.

In the third place, these policies mean that the cost of living will continue to go up and up and up. It was up 5 per cent last year. I have already told the House what this means in terms of facts and figures, cold statistics, but what does it mean to the lives of men and women across the country? I wish at some time in this House we could have a day when members were permitted to say nothing except to read the kind of letters they receive. I know other members get them; I get them all the time. I should just like to read two of these letters this afternoon. Both are from Vancouver. I should like to read an extract from the first one, dated March 12, from a veteran of the second world war. He says in part:

On February 14th last, Mr. Les Benjamin and Mr. John Diefenbaker tried very hard to get Mr. Dubé, Minister for Veterans Affairs, to give some sort—any sort—of answer as when—if ever—the government is likely to implement at least a small part of the Woods report as far as needy ex-servicemen are concerned but met with complete and utter evasion!

How cynical can some politicians get? How cynically disillusioned must any and every war veteran be! What faith in any politician's statements and promises can we place in them?? What sort of faith and belief in our governments can we pass on to our children and our grandchildren???

I have a much briefer letter from another veteran who resides in my riding. I received it the other day. He said: "As my member, you have a duty to get down to the House again and demand from the government to know when they are going to table the Woods report". He seems to feel that tabling the Woods report will be a step toward bringing about an increase in the pensions of veterans and their families.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Getting it implemented.

Mrs. MacInnis: Getting it implemented would. We have been receiving dozens and dozens of letters from people who are desperate. These are people who are the salt of the earth. They have devoted their lives to this country and they want to dedicate their children to this country, but all in vain. If it is in