

*Taxation*

was an opportunity, through sound policies and programs, to provide short-term assistance and long-term plans which would restore our faith in the future.

The budget was an opportunity for this government to take the helm and steer the country to safer and saner economic shores. Unfortunately, it did nothing of the kind. Submerged in producing costly advertisements, which glorify and extol its existence, the government merely peered over the waves and waves of discontent and announced it would continue to fill its own tanks with more of the taxpayers' money. The government is not piloting a ship of state; it is operating a decrepit and leaky submarine. It is a submarine whose skipper and officer mates have spent more time and effort plotting a constitutional course across the Atlantic than they have in concerning themselves with the many depth charges being lobbed in their vicinity. Depth charges, in this instance, may be a misnomer. One only has to glance through the log book of the voyage of this government to realize quickly it has not depth. The budget it presented gives ample evidence of this.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), when presenting his budget, said it had three main themes: restraint, equity and economic renewal. He then proceeded to outline measures whereby everyone but government itself would have to adhere to these goals. Government spending is a prime example.

This fiscal year the government, through tax changes announced in the budget, will increase its revenues by 31 per cent. But government spending, during the same time, will rise an additional 22 per cent. The government spends money at the rate of \$187 million per day, \$8 million per hour and \$130,000 per minute. And on what? On assistance to people losing their homes because of excessively high rates for mortgage renewals? On aid to Canadians struggling under the oppressive burden of escalating prices for food and shelter? Is the money being spent on programs to reduce the cost of gasoline and home heating fuel, or to help small-business men and business women and farmers avoid bankruptcy? Is that \$187 million per day being spent to provide much needed relief to senior citizens and those on low or fixed incomes, or on generating employment for the over one million Canadians out of work? Not that you would notice, Mr. Speaker.

Throughout the budget, the government was telling Canadians that they will have to keep treading water. The government was prepared to offer assistance, and scant help at that, only to those who are going down for the third time.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that people living in the little village of New Dundee renamed it Dire Straits. Since then a great many residents of the country have changed their mailing address to Dire Straits in order to qualify for assistance. But even that has not helped.

Small wonder that Canadians universally condemned the budget and the government. There is a distinct lack of credibility in both when what is being offered is tantamount to launching a two-seat lifeboat from a submerged submarine. The outcry and the outrage over the budget ultimately forced the Minister of Finance to rescind some measures and send some others to committee for review. No one knows when they will

come back to the House for debate in Committee of the Whole. Legislation comes before the House all the time but I feel that nothing is more important than bringing in a new budget. I see no sign of it on the timetable of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard), however.

I feel as I think a great many others do—and if they had the nerve a good many on the government benches would agree—that the entire budget should be scrapped and a new one brought in which would realistically reflect and address the needs of the nation.

I notice newspaper accounts, whether they be fact or not, to the effect that the Minister of Finance intimated that a new budget will be brought down in the fall. If it is necessary in the fall, Mr. Speaker, it is probably needed much more right now.

I would like to reflect for a moment, Mr. Speaker, on the three themes in the budget. The first of these was restraint. This government, having all but destroyed the economy of the nation, now asks Canadians to adjust to living amidst the rubble. We are being told we must cut back on both our style of living and our expectations. There are thousands and thousands of Canadians whose manner of living has anything but style, and whose expectations faded long ago. There is a growing number of Canadians who are thankful they somehow manage to survive, and who are angry that mere survival has become an accomplishment for which to be thankful. The government is urging restraint on a population already reeling under the pressures of inflation.

I think it would make a great deal more sense, and be more acceptable if the government would practice what it preaches. As I mentioned previously, government spending is going to increase by 22 per cent. Although the finance minister promised to reduce the federal deficit, the difference between what the government collects and what it spends will remain as high as \$13 billion. That is probably on the low side.

No one should mistake the promise of a reduced deficit as an indication that the government has repented and is about to abandon its wasteful ways. The Minister of Finance announced government restraint in November. Now the government is asking for authority to borrow \$6.6 billion. A very large part of the government's already rising revenues will be the direct result of the oil pricing agreement it made with the province of Alberta.

The government, having applied special levies and taxes during the protracted negotiations, allowed the increased consumer cost to remain and pocketed the profits from the deal. Despite the fact that it would have had these additional funds to work with, the government chose not to apply them to a true reduction in taxes. It chose, instead, to look upon increased revenues as a means of justifying increased spending. The only thing this government is restraining is its glee.

Mr. Speaker, the second of the minister's budget themes was so-called equity. The finance minister was especially proud of his claimed overhaul of the tax system as a method of achieving this goal. Equity, to the government, consisted of closing