

*The Budget—Mr. R. Caouette*

province of Quebec. This situation will happen over and over because the people there are in their right senses.

A moment ago, Mr. Speaker, I said that the New Democratic Party are using hypocritical means. Let us consider the gist of their amendment to the amendment. There is nothing in there which is part of their own platform.

[English]

—its failure to propose any measures to assist pensioners and other Canadians on low and fixed incomes, to deal with the housing crisis, or to remove the glaring inequities in the taxation system.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I have been saying that all along for the past 35 years. I need not be a socialist for that, but why should their system—Yesterday, in my remarks to the English television network on the budget speech made by the hon. Minister of Finance, I said:

[English]

It is another budget just like the others—take away from the have's to give to the have-not's, so that in the end you will have all kinds of have-not's and no more have's.

● (1700)

[Translation]

The leader of the NDP said it does not go far enough, and, a while ago, the Progressive Conservatives, who represent big business, applauded while being robbed. How is one to understand such reasoning?

Mr. Speaker, the amendment of the NDP means nothing. One can say one is not pleased with the budget. I am not either. But instead of provoking an election which will be costly for the Canadian people, it would probably be better to wait for legislation, propose amendments and fight to get results.

In 1963, we of the Social Credit Party of Canada had the balance of power; in 1965 I was accused of having supported the Liberals of Mr. Pearson. I therefore put the following questions to the voters of Quebec and other areas of Canada: With a minority government, as holders of the balance of power is our role merely to bring about an election or to get results? What should we do? The important thing is to obtain good results for the people, to think of one's country before thinking of one's party.

I shall probably be blamed again for not wanting an election and be accused of playing politics. Mr. Speaker, whether there is an election or not I fear nothing in my riding nor in that of my colleagues. I am convinced we are up to facing an election. But for the time being, I think it would be unwise to call an election after only one and a half year of this minority government. The Canadian people can understand this.

I have one thing to say to the Progressive Conservatives. They have been demanding a budget for at least six months and they say: The government is afraid to bring down its budget, the government fears this or that; the government does not fight inflation. Would the Progressive Conservatives do any better?

Mr. Speaker, let me give one example: last week, I went shopping in Hull to buy Stanfield underwear, and I had to pay three times as much as last year.

[Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue).]

Mr. Speaker, I see the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) smiling. Let him conduct surveys in his own riding so as to know the price of Stanfield underwear in Saint-Hyacinthe. He should know, for they are speaking against inflation. What would he do to deal with inflation? He does not say.

They have been clamouring for a budget for the last six months. I see the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe fairly often on television. He is a very good friend of the CBC people. Indeed, he likes that, he is always the first in line in front of room 130-S, waiting to be invited to speak on television. Moreover, he is a smart dresser.

In 1963, the Conservatives were sitting on this side of the House. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), the then Prime Minister, was leading a minority government. On the night of February 4, if my memory serves me well, the government was defeated because it did not have the courage to bring down a budget. One year without bringing down a budget! Today, the Conservatives are blaming the government. Yet, in 1963, on the night of the vote, the Prime Minister rose and promised to bring down a budget within 30 days in order to save his skin. They were overthrown just the same. So, Mr. Speaker, why play that kind of politics? The Tories should at least be honest enough to recognize that all is not perfect. That is true, but all is not bad either. There were some improvements. Family allowances and old age pensions were increased. Even though the New Democratic Party voted against proposed increases, there was some improvement in the social, economic and agricultural fields.

For example, producers were asking some years ago for \$5 per hundredweight of milk and the government said, it is impossible. Now, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) will have to give farmers at least \$11 per hundredweight for industrial milk. It will come to this, but under a government watched by an alert and careful opposition, we stand a better chance of getting results instead of having elections all the time.

If the New Democratic Party involves Parliament and the people of this country in an election campaign, I am convinced that they will be held fully responsible. The Tories want an election since 1972 because they can see themselves in power. But I have seen them in power here with 208 members out of 264. Mr. Speaker, that was no picnic! Yet they did not lack strength. There were one million unemployed in 1961 under a government with 208 members.

**An hon. Member:** With a runaway inflation!

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, there was unemployment, of course. There were one million unemployed and the cost of living was starting to climb. Did that government so powerful at that time curb increasing prices? Not at all. Now, Progressive Conservatives want to freeze prices and salaries. Everyone knows that the leader of the New Democratic Party is right about that. The freeze would be mostly on salaries.

With respect to prices, the black market would be rampant here in Canada as it was in the United States under similar circumstances. But they do not say so because they are not concerned with the well-being of the people of this