

The Budget—Mr. Benidickson

Mr. Jones: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you could protect the member who has the floor from the interruptions of his own members?

Mr. Benidickson: My point is that, beyond the unknown obligation undertaken in respect of foreign exchange control, this budget has nothing in it to warrant the delay. So far as the deficit is concerned, that was determined many, many months ago. Those who are familiar with government procedures know that in the autumn the colleagues of the Minister of Finance prepare for him the estimates of their departments. This perhaps occurs initially in September. These estimates are reviewed, I know, by the officials of the treasury board and then they go to the minister. The ministry then make a decision with regard to those matters of expenditure before Christmas.

I am sure this course was followed this year. It takes a considerable amount of time to have the printing of the estimates book done so the members of the house can receive the book of estimates. This book of estimates for the next year is usually presented to us in January. The minister told us on Tuesday night that quite irrespective of the lapsings and the increases in expenditures that might occur, this budget on balances involves an increase of about \$450 million during the present 1961-62 fiscal year as compared with the past year.

I say the ministers of the crown had already told the Minister of Finance what they wanted and months ago he had made decisions in respect of those expenditures. In spite of this, when the minister came before us on Tuesday night he said that, in the circumstances confronting Canada "today", it is "appropriate" to do such and such. The minister's colleagues had known for months that they could not make additional expenditures without wrecking the monetary system, but it would seem that for three months he had difficulty in persuading them that these were the hard facts of life. What we really got then, on June 20, although it was wrapped up in these grand words "an economic budget", was a change of only \$65 million. The minister, in standard style, used these lavish words and referred to "my program to stimulate growth, enlarge production, increase trade and extend employment". There was only \$65 million worth of financial change involved as disclosed.

During the last 12 months we have had two budgets. In view of the fact that the minister was hamstrung by decisions made seven months ago when he, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, the Minister of Labour, the Prime Minister and others were saying that there was no emergency, there was

nothing too much to worry about, they thought, I predict that we may have a third budget within a period of 12 months.

This is easily established by looking at the accounts the minister gave us the other night. He said that to the extent our expansion is accelerated there will be an increase in revenues. Here again I say that this is not a frank statement. The budget is supposed to be a presentation by our treasurer to the citizens of Canada, and in my opinion this language involves ambiguity as I suggest it would to most people who read it. I ask the minister, does that mean there is going to be additional revenue or is he prepared to stand by the prediction that there will be acceleration during the current year that is provided for in an increase in revenues during the current year as outlined on page 6666 of *Hansard*?

When we get to the harsh end of the figures the minister says that the tax revenue for the current 1961-62 fiscal year is to be \$5,150 million compared with \$5,016 million last year, a difference of about \$134 million. Is this the minister's best guess as to what our revenues are likely to be? The minister invariably brags, and did on Tuesday, about the growth in the number of people employed. The rise in employment has not been up to ordinary standards and the numbers of unemployed have been greater than the standard. Is the minister predicting that there will be acceleration that will alter these figures before the end of the fiscal year, or is he coming to us frankly and saying that this will be the only increase in revenues compared with last year, based on a budget which, including old age security, non-tax revenues and supplementaries, will I predict eventually come to \$7 billion? Is he saying that this is all that results during the current fiscal year in so far as expansion is concerned? There is not very much expansion here. This is very obvious to most people, except for the type of language that is invariably used by the minister.

The minister said that with the stimulus imparted by his budget proposals to the levels of economic activity he would expect a general rise in our tax revenues between now and next March to offset the particular tax reductions he proposed. I think he is still talking—I want to confirm it—about merely \$134 million of revenue increase this year compared with last year. Of course, in so far as expenditures are concerned he said he had been big-hearted in stimulating the economy on an expansionist basis. After the fine words have been said and the figures have been placed on the Clerk's table, after the oratory is over, we wake up in the morning and read the figures and find that there