

*The Budget—Mr. Corbett*

tions to registered retirement plans, the reduction in the dividend tax credit scheme, the reduction of capital gains, the increase in the 33.3 per cent small business rate to the standard corporate rate of 50 per cent and many other things which had been leaked, "reliably", from the Department of Finance to the pundits in this country, who reported them. It was a little like the wife who came home with a piece of the cheque her husband had given to her saying, "Look at all the money I saved you, dear; I did not buy that new hat or that new bird cage", and so forth. That was the relief part of it.

However, on the other hand, after I had an opportunity to analyse what actually had taken place, I was filled with a kind of disgust at the blatant contradiction we had witnessed. I was disgusted at the contradiction of the terror tactics the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) had imposed secretly on this country during the previous few weeks in anticipation of things which were supposed to be very bad. I felt sickened by all of this. It was a slick, sadistic scenario.

Along with many people in this nation, I feel this budget has done more to polarize the nation and more to harm honest efforts toward constitutional change than any other documentation we have seen put before this House, with the exception of the constitutional matter. Debate on the constitutional matter on the floor of this House was denied to the majority of us here. There is an unhealthy correlation between the budget of the Minister of Finance and the attempts of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to redefine and reshape this country in his own image.

If indeed we are ever to have constitutional reform in this country, it will be much more difficult because of the budget of the Minister of Finance. There are those who believe, with justification, that there has been a deliberate attempt through the introduction of this budget on the part of the Minister of Finance and his cohort the Prime Minister to alienate the east from the west. After all, if the issue can be clouded, what difference do the votes in the west mean to the party which sits opposite? The answer is only too obvious.

It has become apparent that there has been a dramatic increase in talk of separation in the western parts of the country, and with good reason. A few short months ago it was said that only a handful of people in the west were talking about separation. A poll in the last few days showed that because of the alienation the west now feels that number has increased to about 25 per cent—and this is in the early stages. It does not bode well for constitutional talks.

The west is not the only region where there is talk of separation or fear of separation. I heard talk of separation in the east as recently as this morning at the airport where people were seriously talking about where we as eastern Canadians are going to turn for our political affiliations. The British North America Act of 1867 assured co-operation between the partners of this affiliation or confederation. Co-operation was the byword and the foundation upon which the British North America Act was based. The Prime Minister, the first minister of this land, should not act unilaterally to bring that constitution back from Britain without agreement on an amending

formula and without agreement generally between the provinces, the partners of this confederation which, after all, have a substantial stake in the nation.

I speak as a Canadian and as an Atlantic Canadian. I speak as a New Brunswicker when I say that the Prime Minister is wrong in his approach to patriation of the constitution. It is wrong that one man can dictate to this country to satisfy his ego and an obsession caused by his own fanaticism. He is determined to change the course of the history of this nation whether it be for better or worse, as long as it is changed in his image, as he envisions it and without consultation.

The Minister of Finance has brought in a budget which, in the opinion of many of us, will again act to alienate the regions of this country more than to bring them together. Will he, too, act unilaterally? Will he force an end to this debate? Of course, the procedure of the House demands that the debate end, but on an issue as vital to the nation as this and in view of the fact that a good number of people in this House have been denied the opportunity to speak on the constitutional matter, I believe the period of debate on this budget should be extended so that all of those who wish an opportunity to speak on a matter which is so vital to the future of the nation may have that opportunity.

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History will show that neither the Minister of Finance nor the Prime Minister, contrary to what they may think at this time, will go down in the pages of Canadian history books as great men. This House of Commons has been betrayed, its members have been betrayed, the future of the country has been betrayed and, most of all, those Canadians who voted last February for this government have been betrayed. They are, for the most part, good, honest Canadians who believed that the constitutional issue was fundamental to the future of this nation. They were people who believed that those they had elected should have the opportunity to rise in their places in the House and speak on this issue. The people who elected me expected that I would have the opportunity to rise in the House and to speak on this fundamental issue. But I was denied the opportunity, along with a good many other members. I believe history will show that to have been wrong.

Let us look at the budget. Let us consider the terrible things that did not happen to us. Deindexing was the big issue which we had talked about for so long. Thanks to the Minister of Finance, Canadians were spared deindexing. But the minister left the door open. He stated in part that if continued indexing is interpreted as a readiness to accommodate unlimited inflation rates, he might be "faced with no alternative but to impose some limit on the indexing factor." He said to the people in Canada that if they cannot hold down their inflationary ways, then they should watch out because next year they might be subjected to the sort of thing with which he had been threatening them this year. However, apparently it is not going to be this year, and I am sure the people of Canada are grateful.