HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 20, 1983

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1405)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

OBJECTION TO CONDUCT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton South): Madam Speaker, I want to object in the strongest terms possible to the outrageous conduct of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) in deliberately altering his budget in order to cover up his leak of vital contents to a photographer.

First, the Minister broke his ministerial oath of secrecy. Honour, if not the law, would demand his resignation. Then by a calculated act of manipulation he changed the figures, justifying his action of adding $200 million by the claim of increasing job creation. This is both cynical and immoral. It is political trickery that will offend every decent person in Canada. What the Minister of Finance has done is to demonstrate conclusively that the Government is morally bankrupt.

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[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

FUNDS FOR CANADIAN HOME RENOVATION PLAN AND FOR JOB CREATION

Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois (Lotbinière): Madam Speaker, as far as the budget is concerned, there have been some comments just now on the formal aspects, but I think it is more important to emphasize the jobs that will be created. One area that has been the subject of many representations is the Canadian Home Renovation Plan. I believe that the Goverment's decision to earmark $120 million in additional funds for this program and to extend the program until March 31, 1984, was a very important one for the Department of Finance and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), who thereby responded to requests from the people of Quebec and the Members from Quebec for additional funds for the program that would help create jobs in the construction industry. I think that in the circumstances, Canadians and Quebecers can be proud of their Members of Parliament, because their representations were effective and received a positive response from the Department of Finance.

80126—35

[*English*]

WESTERN DEVELOPMENT FUND

ELIMINATION FROM BUDGET

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, in the 1980 Throne Speech the Liberal Government across the way said it would listen to Members of Parliament from western Canada. In the 1980 budget the Liberal Government introduced a Western Development Fund, which was a $4 billion fund to develop western Canada. In the 1981 budget the Liberal Government reduced the Western Development Fund to some $1.8 billion. Last night, as if by some stroke of magic, a puff of smoke or something, this fund was reduced to zero. There is no longer a Western Canada Development Fund. The rest of the country gets six and five while we in western Canada get zero and zero. That is the magic of the Minister of Finance.

There is no western plan, there is no western R & D, and there is no western manufacturing. About the only thing in the budget was hundreds of millions of dollars for big business. In many ways it is a Conservative budget, and the Government across the way should be charged with theft, theft of the Conservative Party's clothes and colours, for the kind of budget that it brought in last night. No wonder the Liberal Party is an endangered species in western Canada. It is about time the Liberal Government reinstated that money for the Western Development Fund.

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THE BUDGET

ISSUE OF SECRECY—CALL FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Madam Speaker, parliamentary government is now over 700 years old. Its development is the result of a long and laborious struggle by ordinary people to elect the representatives who will make laws on their behalf, and to set the rules of accountability to be followed by those elected officials. The office of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is the highest office of trust and fiduciary responsibility. The incumbent must act in that spirit.

The office of Minister of Finance is especially one of trust. The present incumbent, as a lawyer, understands that concept better than anyone else. He swore an oath of secrecy on the