

The Budget—Mr. Scott

almost a hundred years we had a Post Office which delivered letters and parcels. When I was growing up, the postman was a respected member of the community who seemed to be above partisan politics and organized violence. The village post office was often the centre of social activity in the small communities across the country. Now, Mr. Speaker, we find that one of the defeated candidates for the leadership of the Liberal party has reorganized the Post Office. While he was in the process of making a shambles of the Post Office system he made such profound observations as "The practice of sending letters from one person to another person is becoming outmoded. Such things belong to a bygone era." Well, Mr. Speaker, he has proven that point beyond doubt. Mailing a letter in Canada from one person to another, and getting it delivered, does indeed belong to a bygone era.

The minister also closed many of the village and town post offices across the country—as a matter of fact he has closed some 1,200 of them—and told us this saves the Post Office some \$2 million a year. We learn, however, that the Company of Young Canadians is getting almost \$2 million a year to spend doing their thing. I wonder which is more important. We could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, calling attention to such examples of government efficiency as the recent reorganization of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, but in the face of the power-mad group sitting across the chamber any observations we make regarding the inefficiency of the government amount only to painful reminiscence.

This budget is just another straw piled on the back of the Canadian individual, the Canadian voter. Over the next two years we can expect to see more of the same, and the people are already getting tired of excuses in place of answers. We on this side of the House will continue strenuously to oppose the trend to government takeover of Canadian institutions and the suppression of individual freedom. It is not unlikely that two years from now those same voters will decide to cancel the present government's mandate and restore the concept of parliamentary democracy to this country.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, this budget reminds me of a story I heard about a man who was undergoing an examination after applying for life

[Mr. Scott.]

insurance. The doctor asked him the usual routine questions before inquiring, "Have you ever had a serious accident?" The man replied that he had not. The doctor then asked him to undress for a physical examination, and in the course of it he was astonished to find a very long scar running down the man's side. "What happened?" he asked. "I was gored by a bull", the man replied. "I thought you said you had never had a serious accident", said the doctor. "I didn't", the patient replied, "The bull did it on purpose."

This is exactly how it is with the budget now before us. At first sight, people are apt to believe that it could not have been done on purpose, that it was an accident. Large groups of citizens have been waiting and waiting for it with high hopes. They have been told over and over again that the government was reviewing the position of the various social security measures, that a review was in progress. They have been bombarding us with letters asking when this review would be completed. Surely, they thought, when the budget comes down it will contain measures to help us until the review is completed and long-term decisions are made.

People were stunned to hear the minister make the budget speech he did. Here are some of the points the hon. gentleman made. I myself was startled to hear them expressed in one short passage of the budget presentation. All this happened in 1969: (1) the rate of economic growth declined, (2) unemployment increased, (3) housing starts were fewer, (4) interest rates rose, (5) consumer debt rose, (6) wheat sales declined, (7) the cost of living climbed steadily and (8) the problems of the cities grew apace.

● (5:50 p.m.)

The startling thing is that the minister forecast that all this would continue into 1970 and he did not limit the period of its continuance. The minister himself forecast that all these ills would continue to get worse in the period ahead. He knew what he was talking about, because the policies of the government have made certain that this state of affairs will continue in the way it has for the last two years. The budget is the result of a complete lack of leadership over the last two years on the part of the government; and the people of Canada who need help have been looking in vain to the government to give this leadership.