

*The Budget—Mr. Wagner*

enterprise is being squarely asked to take upon itself the leadership to ensure the well-being of Canadians. Yes, this budget is anti-social because it does not take into account at all the fact that in the pattern of consuming society the average Canadians had to increase their indebtedness by 15 per cent over the first three months of 1975.

That does not take into account the fact that 55 per cent of Quebec households are in debt, and that about 25 per cent of them are literally strangled by their debts.

This budget is over-centralizing, bearing in mind two of its propositions, that is: The municipal works program and the announcement that the Federal government might withdraw from hospital insurance and medicare programs. Mr. Speaker, should we once again remind the government that municipalities are provincial creatures and that any community development project must be, if not of exclusively provincial inspiration, at least jointly developed and implemented.

On another level, we cannot and do not accept that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Messrs. Turner and Lalonde) should decide unilaterally to impose provinces with a ceiling on hospital and medicare costs, especially after they have promoted the establishment of programs, not so long ago, against the explicit will of the most populated provinces in the country. By the way, the fact that they have already put a ceiling on the *per capita* rate of increase of the federal participation in medical insurance, until 1978-1979, is completely foolish.

How can a government who is unable to plan the economy for the six months to come, establish the maximum increase rate of health costs, until 1978-1979, when he does not know either the impact of the future pay settlements on costs increases, or the costs increases due to a growth of health services? It is sheer thoughtlessness. The only explanation I can see is that the central government forces the provincial governments to limit their participation in hospital and health insurance programs at least as far as the working class is concerned.

This is, Mr. Speaker, a direct interference in the free negotiations that will take place soon in the hospital sector, particularly in Quebec. And it is a principle that we cannot accept. I cannot understand that Quebec Liberals among whom there are ex-unionists as the hon. member for Longueuil (Mr. Olivier) and the hon. member for Sainte-Marie (Mr. Dupont) can applaud at such a procedure on the part of the federal government. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde)—who is also called the meat minister—interfere directly and impudently in the reversal of the next collective bargainings in the public sector in Quebec. In fact, there is another area in which Ottawa makes fun of provinces and it is unemployment insurance for which the budget provides some adjustments and particularly the suppression of the additional allowance for persons with dependents and the eligibility for the plan of people 65 years old or more. In doing so, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Health and Welfare are insulting the heads of families who are already humiliated because of their unemployment and also our senior citizens who wish to continue to serve

actively the community in a field where they are competent. I consider that it is inhuman and aberrant.

It is also a breach of provincial prerogatives when federal-provincial consultations are under way to define an integrated social policy and when we are delaying the implementation of a minimum guaranteed income policy for everyone.

Let us see whether the Premier of Quebec, a friend of my hon. friends opposite, does not himself believe, and I quote:

That the Turner budget will affect Quebec

This should read "the Quebec government". I, for one, am convinced this budget will affect both Quebecers as a whole and other provincial governments.

I suggest the budget is totally inadequate considering what has been announced in the area of housing, considering the total silence regarding interest rates. I suggest this is absolutely evasive as far as farm credit is concerned for instance. Is that another indication of this liberal government's lack of concern for farmers and their needs, an area where everything should be done if an increased farm production is seriously envisaged and especially when reference is made in other forums of our increasing responsibility to hungry peoples of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the budget is evasive and it is also absolutely devoid of morals. I feel it is devoid of morals for the reasons I have been putting forward, and also because if one excepts the propositions to increase oil and gas prices and to impose resource taxation, which is over centralizing, this budget is a sham, an example of a wait-and-see policy. It is devoid of morals because it allows people to believe action is being taken, and above all because the goods promised at this time last year are not being delivered. Because there is no sign of that air of leadership that was put on when the train entered the station during the last federal campaign. Because so much noise was made with promises of a consensus from all parties to the economy, knowing full well were it only by experience, that we cannot at the same time seek a consensus with given partners and then threaten them to infringe upon their jurisdiction or their purpose, devoid of any morals because they do not put their money where their mouth is, because they do not have the guts to take the only measure which I believe was needed, that is a budget that would have set up certain selective controls and favoured more precisely some industrial areas so that we could have found in it an employment policy worthy of its designation.

It is therefore with a very clear mind that I will vote against this budget, and I hope this government, through the Minister of Finance, will continue to look for new measures to fight inflation. By the way, maybe I could give a little friendly advice to the government and tell them that if they want to cut into government expenses or travel expenses of the ministers, when the time will come to distribute cheques issued by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion or any other department, it might rely on the Post Office and mail those cheques to different ridings instead of doing as they did in Saint-Hyacinthe, asking the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Sauvé) to go in the riding and hand herself the cheques, when the people will have to kneel to her as that happened many times. If the government do not trust the regularly elected