

Social Policy

Mr. Clark: Where is the minister?

Mr. Martin: The hon. member for York-Simcoe said that we should knock \$2 billion off the operating expenditures of the government. That sounds great.

Mr. Alexander: Read his entire speech. You should not be selective.

Mr. Martin: Distinguished senior members of the Conservative party, such as the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) and the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), have now promoted a particular policy which would not reduce the government's budget by \$2 billion, but rather would add \$2 billion to the budget.

Mr. Alexander: What are you talking about?

Mr. Martin: Even hon. members of the opposition have to face simple arithmetic. They should realize that two plus two equals four.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege, a point of order, or whatever Your Honour prefers to call it. I want to second guess the hon. member who has the floor. If he is talking about the spouse's allowance, and I hope he is—

Mr. Martin: That is the motion.

Mr. Alexander: All right, I am glad that is clear. If the hon. member is talking about the spouse's allowance, he should not leave the impression that it will cost \$2 billion. I have heard from departmental officials and from the hon. member from Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that the cost will be approximately \$4 million. I do not think the hon. member should mislead the House by indicating in an offhand fashion that the cost will be \$2 billion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) that he is not presenting a point of order, nor a question of privilege. He is raising a point of debate. The Chair has been fair with all hon. members. They have wandered all over the lot in dealing with this subject.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon I was accused by the hon. member for St. John's East of knowing nothing about health and welfare programs.

Mr. Alexander: That is correct.

Mr. Martin: Perhaps I do not know as much as the distinguished hon. member for Halmilton West, because I have not been around here as long. However, in order to implement the spouse's allowance policy for people aged 60 to 65, without any means or needs test of any kind, I understand the full cost would be \$2 billion.

[Mr. Martin.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: You are wrong, sir.

Mr. Paproski: You are wrong.

Mr. Martin: If my figures are incorrect, as hon. members opposite are indicating, I stand to be corrected. Certainly those are the figures I have been given.

Mr. Clark: The problem is that you cannot read your figures.

Mr. Martin: That is the first flip-flop, a \$4 billion flip-flop. I am glad the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) is present in the chamber. He can participate in the flip-flop being performed by the members of his party. I am delighted.

The second flip-flop might be called the "DDM flip-flop," the displaced deputy ministers' situation. That is another flip-flop on the part of members of the party which is hoping to be elected as the government some time in this century.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Will there be an election in this century?

Mr. Martin: A senior member of the Conservative party from the Winnipeg area, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie), indicated that when his party forms the government the deputy ministers will be dismissed. The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) made a quick about-face and said, "No, no, we will keep the deputy ministers. We would not get rid of deputy ministers." By coincidence, he represents a seat in the area of the nation's capital.

Some hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Alexander: Stick to the motion.

Mr. Martin: The third flip-flop was in the areas of capital punishment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): I suggest the hon. member for Scarborough West (Mr. Martin) should direct his remarks to the resolution under discussion.

● (1752)

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, I am coming to that. I might add that in the course of debate this afternoon we have had introduced a circular put out by the income tax department; we have had reference to the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer), and the sum of \$10,000; and we have had reference to unemployment insurance. However, I am prepared—

An hon. Member: Read the motion; it says "inequities."

Mr. Martin: I am prepared to move from this after just saying in passing that I noted earlier that the hon. member for Hamilton West told us he had supported a piece of legislation in this House which he now calls the worst piece of legislation