

The Address—Mr. Stewart

gratulations on her election. I do not wish to place undue emphasis on the fact of her femininity because I am not a male chauvinist, but I would be remiss if I did not draw attention to the fact that she is the first woman to occupy the Speaker's chair. The fact that she is the first woman Speaker and a Quebecker I hope will be synonymous with the "Yvettes" and result in a resounding No vote in the coming Quebec referendum. This is a wish that I know is shared by Madam Speaker and by each of the members here assembled. Her record of accomplishment in the fourth estate and in government speaks for itself.

As this is my maiden speech in this chamber, I should like to take this opportunity to thank the electors of Simcoe South for the confidence they have placed in me by electing me to the House of Commons on two consecutive occasions. I pledge my devoted and undivided service to each and every constituent's needs as well as to the work of this House.

Last December I was to make my maiden speech during the budget debate but we all know what happened on that Thursday night. Now, instead of making my maiden speech during the throne speech debate, I find myself thrust back into a budget debate. For that is what this is as a result of a little back door end run by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) just over two weeks ago.

There was no formal notice given by the minister to the opposition of this mini-budget. In it there was no real economic direction, and the direction, if you wish to call it that, was without the traditional parliamentary approval. No six-day debate was allowed. Arrogance again rears its ugly head. Sidestepping the system is an abrogation of the rights of the Canadian people.

The hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), the following evening, termed it not just a mini-budget but a Minnie Mouse budget. Well, I think it was a mini-skirt budget. It skirted economic reality, the home owners' dilemmas, high interest rates and the commuters' concerns for gasoline prices. A mini-skirt should be short enough to be interesting but long enough to cover the subject. The mini-budget was neither, as it was short on fiscal and social measures, other than those it emulated from the previous government, but very long on spending.

There was a \$7.9 billion increase in expenditures, the greatest in Canadian history. Is that something of which we can be proud? And with no right of debate, this was the same situation as we had with the imposition of the metric system. There was no right of parliamentary questioning. The lack of debate on the metric system was eloquently outlined by the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm).

It is not just a question of metric being right or wrong but that we are seven to nine years ahead of our neighbour to the south and our major trading partner, the United States. Again, it is circumvention of the traditional parliamentary system to debate metric conversion and to debate this mini-budget. What it all adds up to, as the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) so aptly stated, is a complete lack of responsibility from those across the floor of this House.

Years ago when Liberal arrogance and contempt for Parliament was first being test-marketed, Mackenzie King and his minions used to announce new tax measures on the radio. Being in the tobacco business, I waited with bated breath for the increase in tobacco tax. But I noted with great interest that the increase is again done in pounds in this budget by a supposedly metrified minister of finance. At least the Minister of Finance has enough respect for Parliament and enough personal courage to come into the House and outline some of his bold and brazen measures, some of them purloined, as I have stated before, from the Crosbie budget of the last Parliament.

I find the minister's new tax increases unacceptable. I find the minister's new forecasts of deficit spending unacceptable. I find the minister's methods of introducing a budget without actually calling it a budget unacceptable. I represent almost 100,000 people of Simcoe South and I believe that they, like the chamber of commerce and the manufacturers' association, find it unacceptable.

My constituency of Simcoe South is a microcosm of Canada. It is a melting pot of various ethnic backgrounds and origins. It is a cross-section of Canada. Yes, it is a melting pot, yet the quintessence of national unity. I represent six rich and beautiful townships, Flos, Vespra, Innisfil, Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury. I represent small businessmen, industry, tourism, agriculture with the black muck farmers of the famed Holland Marsh and Bradford area and the members of the armed forces with their dependants of Canadian Forces Base Borden.

My city is beautiful Barrie, Ontario's most progressive city situated on the shores of Kempenfeldt Bay. The CNR has wound its way all along that shore, for years despoiling it. But now our city has the opportunity of taking over much of that shoreline for municipal purposes if the CN will co-operate with the mayor and myself in trading industrial land, so that our lakeshore may be preserved in all its natural beauty.

My constituents like other Canadians are subject to the vagaries of patchwork quilt government. They are the innocent victims of high interest rates, near double-digit inflation, uncertain energy supplies and pricing and all the other major economic indicators which are out of whack because of the past 16 years of "true Grit" government. They are helpless to defend themselves against an unstable economic system. My constituents are powerless to plan for the future with any degree of optimism or certainty. They are caught on a treadmill trying to survive, trying to keep up with the hardships that fiscal and monetary measures inflict upon them.

Where in the minister's budget is there relief for the home owner? Where is the mortgage tax credit which would have cushioned the home owner against rising mortgage interest rates and property tax increases? The mortgage tax credit program proposed by the previous government would have lowered interest rates in many cases to 12 per cent. One might stand high interest rates but not the loss of one's home. In my riding there are 27,785 homes with 20,030 of them owned not by rich people but by people with mortgages who need help.