

The Budget—Mr. Andre

Mr. Andre: There is the man with the collar. What a disgrace! I was talking to a backbench member of the Liberal party and in all sincerity he said he was worried. He had been talking to his "twin" and was worried about what his twin was telling him about the mood. He said he did not understand why they are so upset. He was honest; he does not understand. This body blow is not the first one. This has been happening virtually since—

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: The hon. member from Quebec should read this little story about Louis Riel and what he was asking about resources and how Ottawa reacted to that. They stomped on him. Ottawa stomped on Riel.

An hon. Member: Soak your head!

Mr. Andre: You sheik! The hon. member for Sarnia did not understand why the west was so opposed when Petrosar went to Sarnia. He thought, "We can share all across the country". He thought that Albertans were being selfish to begrudge the Petrosar plant to Sarnia and I think he was sincere. The reason he could say that is because he did not know why Alberta was so upset. Well, it was because at the Western Economics Opportunities Conference in July, 1973, "We will try to build up your economy. Yes, we will try to secure more processing of raw materials close to the source." For Alberta, that meant the development of a petrochemical industry. But five months later the government announced, "Get back in line,—Petrosar is going to Sarnia." It was not that Albertans begrudged Sarnia the Petrosar plant, but the fact is Alberta just could not understand how the Prime Minister could make a solemn promise at a conference called by him to discuss western economic opportunities and break it five months later.

He did worse than that, Mr. Speaker. Two months later he promised the fullest discussion before acting unilaterally. I am sure the Minister of Finance will remember this because he was government House leader at the time. Part of that organic understanding with that group over there was when David Lewis said, "Do something about inflation or I will bring your government down." They put a price freeze on crude oil. At the time the price was to go up from \$4 to \$4.10. That was six weeks after they had promised, publicly, to the producing provinces that there would be the fullest discussion before any energy policy was announced. Right then and there, when David Lewis said, "Do something," they said "We will do it—we will stomp on the west." David Lewis got his just reward. He was tossed out for that chicanery. But central Canadians said "Good for you, Pierre" and gave him a majority.

Mr. Speaker, I see you rising. I did not talk about all the things I wanted to but I will make one more plea to those hon. members opposite who care about Canada: please question what you are so quickly approving because you do more damage than you know.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Dionne (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate on the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) on October 28 last. The member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) has not even taken the trouble to read the budget and, in my opinion, if he could have been a little more specific, he would not have talked so much rubbish, just as his party could have brought down a more constructive document on December 13 last, since it was defeated as a result of its budget, if one is to believe the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

I cannot refrain from feeling sorry for the Progressive Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, who, after 17 years in the opposition, have been thrown back there, because the Canadian people rejected the budget they brought down last December. I said when I made my maiden speech in the House that the Conservatives had known some hard times for 17 years. If we compare the budget of the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) with the budget of the Minister of Finance, we realize that the budget of the Clark government was devoid of ideas.

● (2100)

As for the new taxes contained in the Crosbie budget, they hurt as much as the spines of desert cactuses. The Crosbie budget was so bad that I suspect the Canadian people will remember it for at least another 17 years.

Some hon. Members: Right on!

Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi): The Canadian people made no mistake in bringing back the Trudeau government to power. The Crosbie budget took from the poor to give to the rich. Let us talk about social laws, Mr. Speaker: the fact remains that it was this same Liberal government which, in this country, passed 90 per cent of all our social laws.

An hon. Member: That is true.

Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi): People should be reminded here that, had the Progressive Conservative budget been passed, it would have cost every Canadian family \$800 more a year because Mr. Crosbie increased the excise tax on oil by 18 cents a gallon. It would have cost us even more for food, clothing, housing, heating our homes and driving our cars. Heating and transportation alone would have cost every Canadian family an estimated \$381 more a year, had the Crosbie budget been accepted.

The argument put forward by the Progressive Conservatives to justify that excise tax increase on gas was that it would encourage Canadians to save energy; but in that case, the government could have or should have exempted public transports, city buses and trains, if the people were to use their cars less. The Progressive Conservatives were forgetting that people have to travel to get to work.