

The Budget—Mr. Coldwell

down the flames with the other". At the present time it seems clear that the government is relying on events in the United States to pull them out. It is true that there is a sign of slackening in the United States at the moment, but it would be very premature to believe that, with all the pressure for defence expenditures, this slackening will be anything but temporary. It is much more likely that this results from some confusion and overlapping surrounding the changeover from civilian to wartime production. Indeed I read only today that evidently there has been poor co-ordination between wartime spending and civilian spending. I hope the government will not rely wholly on the United States, but that they will take whatever further steps are necessary.

I am not asking for a miracle. On the other hand negation is not a policy. The only result that follows from the disposition to use the old adage "wait and see" was described many years ago. This result can easily be "too little and too late".

I venture to use again the words I used the other evening: how long does this government think they can turn their backs on the people and still say that they have the people at their backs?

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Ross):

That all the words after "that" to the end of the question be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"the proposals of the Minister of Finance are unsatisfactory because they will inevitably increase the cost of living for all and especially for those least able to bear it.

This house condemns in particular, as inflationary, the increase by 25 per cent of the general sales tax and is of the opinion that the increase is unnecessary and unwise.

This house further condemns the heavy increase in excise taxes on certain essential commodities and is of the opinion that much of the government's proposed huge increase in taxation is due to its own extravagance.

This house regrets the failure of the government to take effective steps to deal with profiteering."

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, in spite of what I may say a little later about the budget, I wish to join with the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell) who, shortly after the budget was delivered, complimented the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) upon his manner of delivery, and his placement of the records of the financial operations of the government before the country. I think the minister in the budget he has brought down has placed before the house a clear exposition of the government's view respecting the financial situation in which the country finds itself at the present time.

I join however with the hon. member for Greenwood in criticizing the department for not having estimated the surpluses more accurately than they have been estimated from year to year. There may of course be reasons why this has happened, but nonetheless I think we should have greater accuracy than we have had during the last number of years.

I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell). I agree with much of the criticism which he levelled at the budget, and at the government whose budget it is. I shall perhaps repeat some of that criticism but in a different manner.

We do indeed live in very interesting and challenging times. I know that people sometimes wonder how we are going to get through the period in which we are living, but I think one is privileged to live in a period like this when there are so many challenges to society and when we are in the midst of such great economic and social changes.

In his budget the minister stated that there were two great issues which face the world today. First, there is the achievement of an enduring and expanding peace, and then there is the other problem of inflation. In our opinion the first is primarily a question of how best to achieve world understanding and co-operation through the United Nations. We believe that the second problem can be dealt with primarily as a domestic problem. I do not agree that we have to rely on conditions in the United States or have to be wholly governed by what happens within the borders of our great neighbour. Of course we cannot be entirely uninfluenced by what takes place there and indeed across the world.

Regarding the problem of peace, we realize that all we can do, and indeed all we must do is to use our influence and power for the peaceful settlement of disputes among nations. We are of necessity forced to accept the co-operative decisions arrived at after consultation and negotiation with other members of the United Nations. In other words, whether we like it or not we are not wholly and entirely sovereign in the realm of international affairs.

On the other hand, while our domestic economy, as I have just said, cannot remain uninfluenced by world economic trends and tendencies, there is much that we can do within our own borders to protect our people from the devastating results of such runaway inflation as we are experiencing at the present time. The government has not done anything, nor does the budget do anything