

The Budget—Mr. Best

council for Canada, splitting off, as it did, as a section of the national research council, the first and senior body. I know that in our country we have great room, great need for a medical research council, and also for an agricultural research council. We would not entirely be copying the British example in this field where there is a medical research council, an agricultural research council and a department, I believe it is called, of scientific and industrial research, but nevertheless there is a pattern there to follow. We would be fulfilling a need for co-ordination of the tremendously costly yet important agricultural research programs which go on in this country. We have huge amounts of funds spent in the federal Department of Agriculture in this field. We have the farm system, the research and administration stations. We have our various provincial departments of agriculture and their corresponding educational institutions and research stations. I know there is some measure of liaison among these bodies now, but I think a central council which might in itself at first not have its own research facilities but would at least be a co-ordinating and advisory group in the agricultural field would indeed be merited.

Perhaps I am presumptuous in mentioning my third point. It is that in the years ahead a new ministry might be considered for our government, a ministry for science with a minister for science at cabinet level. In this we would also be following the British tradition established in 1959, when Lord Hailsham was made the first minister for science. The American, and other governments, have cabinet level people in this position. There is some value in having at cabinet level a minister who would have responsible to him such bodies as an agricultural research council and, I would hope, the national research council and medical research council now established, probably also Atomic Energy of Canada and possibly other organizations as well. This might be a means of pointing up to Canadians the tremendous importance of research funds and activities and the results of research, and also making such ever more important knowledge directly available to cabinet. There are naturally research matters and research projects which cut across all departments, and which take place in many of them. I am not suggesting that they be taken out of such departments. At first a new ministry might indeed be an advisory and co-ordinating area, or person, to whom the various bodies I have mentioned would be responsible.

I put forward these three ideas in some humility and in the hope they may be considered in the months and years ahead.

[Mr. Best.]

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): Mr. Speaker, as custodian of the rules of the house I am sure Your Honour will be relieved when I assure you that I do not intend to follow the example of the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Best), who devoted 20 of the 30 minutes at his disposal to what I believe is the most important political event that has occurred in this country for some time, the national Liberal rally. I must say that we on this side of the house are exceedingly grateful for the amount of attention that hon. gentlemen opposite have already given to that important event in this debate, particularly when we compare it with their very sparse references to the speech made by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) on Tuesday, December 20, a speech which most of them would apparently prefer to forget.

It is also noteworthy that the hon. member spent another 5 of his 30 minutes grinding his own particular axes, which no doubt could have been done at some time or other but which should not take up time in the budget debate. I assume that is also another measure of the hon. member's evaluation of the importance of the present budget.

I, sir, intend to discuss the budget and matters related to it; and unlike the hon. member for Halton, when I talk about the budget I intend to talk about the reason we had a budget. That is the unemployment crisis that exists in this country at the present time. The hon. member for Halton did not allow the naughty word "unemployment" to pass his lips.

I am not going to say that this budget is all bad. It is like the curate's egg; it is only bad in parts. I suggest, however, that an egg which is only bad in parts is not a very attractive article. That is perhaps one of the reasons the supporters of the government are anxious not to talk about this particular egg which was laid by the Minister of Finance.

There seems to be some doubt in the minds of many people as to why there was an extra or supplementary budget at all. The only reason I can think of for this is that the Minister of Finance himself felt he was being eclipsed in the struggle for publicity, and that the only way he could hold up his end was to bring down a budget. While there are one or two things the minister is proposing to do which are not bad—and we will indicate our position on them when the time comes—there is no adequate excuse for having a budget at all.

If the minister had come in with that modesty which characterizes some of his colleagues and said, "We feel there are a few changes that might be made that would not