

Effect of Budgetary Proposals

lous, being inconsistent or unjustifiable, as a member of the opposition, it is also true that I would agree with the views of the hon. member for Peace River.

However, we will vote against this motion. I will try to make comments which will be in order. Certainly we will vote against this motion of the Conservatives because its subject matter is ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, the motion reads as follows:

That this House expresses its lack of confidence that the combination of the corporate tax reductions and accelerated depreciation write-offs contained in the Budget of May, 1972 and proposals contained in the Budget of February, 1973 constitutes an adequate and equitable response to the needs of the country.

We will vote against this motion because it is nonsense, at least as far as its subject matter is concerned, no matter what the reasons of the different parties are. If we are going to discuss, at your invitation, the acceptability of this motion, we have to talk about its subject matter and, in this respect, I am merely referring to Standing Order 58.

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 58(2) lists a series of items on the business of supply and I shall not read them before the House. Opposition motions are defined as follows in paragraph (3):

Opposition motions on allotted days may be moved only by members in opposition to the government and may relate to any matter within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada—

I maintain that the motion now before the House, however ridiculous it may be, is within the jurisdiction of Parliament, anyway.

Paragraph (5) of the same Standing Order deals with the allotted time for the business of supply. I shall now put forward an argument which has apparently been overlooked by those who spoke before. It reads as follows:

For the period ending not later than December 10, five sitting days shall be allotted to the business of supply. Seven additional days shall be allotted to the business of supply in the period ending not later than March 26. Thirteen additional days shall be allotted to the business of supply in the period ending not later than June 30. These twenty-five days are to be designated as allotted days.

Under a general agreement between House leaders, that number of days is fairly divided in proportion to the number of members.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we cannot have opposition days whenever we choose; we have to present a motion at the time provided under Standing Orders.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre maintains that this is a question of anticipation but I think he is wrong and I believe he disavows the position he was holding at the time the government had a majority, namely that the object of an opposition day is to enable any opposition party to present a motion on supply or on the budget, in short, a substantive motion blaming the government for not having done such or such a thing and expressing doubts about the efficiency of this or that government policy.

Mr. Speaker, however ridiculous the subject matter of the motion presented by the Progressive Conservative party, which gives absolutely nothing and against which we shall vote, I nevertheless believe the hon. member for Peace River presented arguments to support the interests

[Mr. Fortin.]

of the opposition parties and I hope that the Progressive Conservative party will carefully draft their motions from now on so as not to cast any doubt on the work and rights of the opposition parties in the House.

• (1600)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I might say that I would be prepared to give a ruling now, but I certainly do not want to limit the right of hon. members to contribute to the procedural debate. I am not sure whether the right hon. gentleman wishes to rise on a point of order.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I had nothing to do with the drafting of this motion. For that reason I feel I can be perfectly objective. The rule is very clear that there cannot be repetitious motions or amendments in the same session. However, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) has carefully and meticulously distinguished this resolution or amendment from coming within the ambit of that general rule.

I must say that I have been tremendously moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) as he wrapped himself in the unctuous purity of parliamentary perfection. If I did not know him as well as I do, I would regard his views as sanctimonious declarations in order to exculpate his party from the difficult position in which they find themselves.

It has been an interesting afternoon. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) spoke with that eloquence that always characterizes him when he has a bad case. It was interesting that, from time to time as he spoke, he turned toward the right and looked at the left.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: It reminds me of the old song "Absolutely, Mr. Gallagher; Positively, Mr. Shean". He spoke of parliament and its greatness. Then came the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and he said: "I am not a bit frightened. We don't mind what decision Your Honour makes. We are fearless and we are going to go contrary to everything that we declared during the election campaign".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: If it had not been for that declaration, Your Honour, I would not have referred to this at all during the course of what I have to say. But I have never seen anything since Damon and Pythias that equals that fine relationship. Here was the President of the Privy Council. One good turn deserves another. Only a few weeks ago the NDP threw out a life line to save the government, and in doing so saved not only the government but itself.

Today there is a return performance. I know how the heart of the President of the Privy Council burns within him as he thinks of the desperate position in which the NDP finds itself. I say these things because throughout the argument up to the present moment there have been references to parliament and what parliament stands for.