

The Budget—Mr. Hopkins

We like to talk about finances, Mr. Speaker, when it is favourable to us. We hate to talk about finances when the situation is not favourable, but these are the facts of life which we must face. From listening to speeches in this House and on television, I have almost come to believe that it is sinful to pay your bills and have a surplus. Is it wrong for a country to be in a healthy financial situation? We have a national debt! We have bills which cannot avoid being paid! We have made commitments for which we must provide funds! I wish to remind the main critics of this budget that it is better to have a surplus in 1970 than to repeat what happened when Her Majesty's Opposition was in power. There was approximately \$990 million in the unemployment insurance fund at that time. During their administration they not only depleted that amount, but additional funds had to be added. I do not consider that to be responsible financing. Canadians are proud people. They like to pay their bills. There is no sense trying to be good boys today and then being in a serious financial state tomorrow. It is a hard fact to face, but responsible people must face it.

When watching a television program a few weeks ago of a massive meeting in Toronto, chaired by John Hull, head of Public Relations Services Limited, the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Kaplan)—who was successful in defeating a very eminent Canadian in the last federal election,—was asked the blanket question, are you or are you not in favour of the white paper? I think that is the most ridiculous question which could be asked of any individual on any platform with regard to a document covering as much ground as does the white paper. There are many parts of the white paper which are good; there are others which in my opinion could stand improvement. But let us get this straight: it is, after all, a white paper, not legislation, and the present government is, to my knowledge, the only government which has had the intestinal fortitude to put out a white paper on financial and taxation matters for discussion by the general public. This is an innovation in Canadian politics. I do not mind all the mail I am getting on the subject. I am getting lots of mail, and I intend to answer it. Let it not be forgotten that the document is intended for discussion by the people; it is not a fait accompli.

● (5:50 p.m.)

I am sorry the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) is not in the House now but he
[Mr. Hopkins.]

was here today. I do not intend to attack him in his absence from Ottawa in the same way as hon. members opposite attacked my leader when he was absent from the House in the North a short while ago. The Leader of the Opposition has been travelling across the country complaining about the white paper. That is his privilege. He is saying that if some parts of it are implemented he will repeal the legislation should he get into power. Thus, he is building up his image as a responsible financier. I am not saying he is not a responsible financier, Mr. Speaker, but I should like to remind the Canadian public that at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, there is a monument in the shape of a heavy water plant; it has been built since 1963 when the hon. gentleman was premier of Nova Scotia. To date, \$110 million has been sunk into that plant by Nova Scotia and it was supposed to have started production a few years ago. So far, however, it has not produced a single thing. Now, we are told that a further \$30 million or \$40 million will be required to repair this plant and put it into shape. This will bring the total up to about \$140 million. I hope the time is not far distant when this plant will begin to produce, because we are in a serious situation in this country as far as supplies of heavy water are concerned. My own constituency is affected as far as Atomic Energy of Canada is concerned.

My point is this: the Leader of the Opposition is going around the country trying to convince the Canadian people that he is an expert on taxation and other financial matters. Let him at the same time explain, particularly to 760,000 good people in Nova Scotia, why he spent \$110 million of their tax money on a project which to date has not produced even one pound of heavy water for this country. Is this evidence of solid financial sense?

An hon. Member: What about the *Bonaventure*?

Mr. Hopkins: We could go into many things. If the hon. member wishes me to quote something I will be happy to do so. This is an item taken from the Charlottetown *Guardian* of June 28, 1969. It is headed: "Glace Bay Heavy Water Plant requires \$30 Million Face Lift". It reads:

A report on the Deuterium of Canada Limited heavy water plant at Glace Bay, N.S. says the plant will need substantial modification before it can be brought into production, Premier G. I. Smith of Nova Scotia stated Friday.