

The Budget—Mr. J. M. Macdonnell

has often been described as being a case of "too much money chasing too few goods". It is easy enough to describe the cure as being "more production and less consumption". The other day I quoted briefly, as reported at page 1784 of *Hansard*, a well-known economist who says:

If when I get a larger income in dollars for myself I produce at the same time correspondingly more than I produced before, this will not raise my neighbour's cost of living.

But as often as I get a larger income without at the same time producing correspondingly more than I produced before, my success in getting more income for myself must raise my neighbour's cost of living.

And in parallel with this, whenever my neighbour gets a larger income in dollars for himself and at the same time enlarges his own output correspondingly, he will not raise my cost of living.

But as often as he gets a larger income without at the same time producing correspondingly more than he produced before, his own success in getting more income for himself must raise my cost of living.

I suggest that there is common sense in that which we would do well to ponder.

Let me now review the situation upon which our minds are concentrated and which affects us all—the cost of living. Here are the figures for the last sixteen months, the basis of comparison being August, 1939:

January, 1950	161
April 1	164
July 3 (after the first impact of Korea)	167·5
October 2	170·7
January 1, 1951	172·5
February 1, 1951	175·2
March 1	179·7

It does not need any clairvoyant to know what this means to people with low incomes. The figures speak volumes in themselves. One or two of the letters quoted the other evening by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mrs. Fairclough) point up the situation. The hon. member for Hamilton West can speak with special authority for the Canadian housewife. One letter has this to say—it will be found at page 1770 of *Hansard*:

We do not ask for luxuries, but as prices are now, how does the government think an aged person can get even the necessities of life out of \$40 per month? Take room rent out, and what is left to live on for a month?

Here is another letter—page 1769:

May I bring to your attention the helplessness of our aged people? There is no union to help them as have the workers; the aged cannot go on strike. You know that \$40 will not pay for rent, heat, clothing, food, etc.

I do not need to say more. The widespread distress is a matter of common knowledge, particularly among the aged and many large sections of the white-collar workers, indeed

among all people who are not highly enough organized to make their increases in pay keep up with the cost of living.

There seems to be only one person I know of who is ignorant of this situation, and that is the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe). The minister said, as reported on page 1762 of *Hansard* of April 9:

I am sure that we can get along quite comfortably as consumers and still engage in a substantial defence effort.

And a little later:

Unless all-out war comes, Canadians can continue to live well.

I find it hard to realize that a man so realistic as the minister is able to shut his eyes to this situation. But we must remember that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) has told us that the Minister of Trade and Commerce and he are in a very privilege position. According to the Minister of Agriculture they constitute a kind of triumvirate or big three who are separate, not only from all the rest of us, not only from all the other members of their own party, but from all other members of the cabinet. Here are the words used by the Minister of Agriculture in referring to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), the Minister of Trade and Commerce and himself, as reported on page 1480 of *Hansard* of March 20:

As long as the three of us remain where we are, I think it will be fairly generally agreed across the country that we have an exceedingly good government.

That remark was a surprise to me. I have always regarded the Minister of Agriculture as a modest man, and I was surprised that he should single out in this way himself and others and attempt to put themselves above all the rest of us. I was reminded of these lines from Julius Caesar with which we were all made so familiar in school:

Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

It is not for me as a humble member of the opposition to discriminate among the great or near great. It is not for me to say whether that is a fair judgment as between this triumvirate and the other members of the cabinet. I suppose the other members of the cabinet just say to themselves, "That is the minister's way, and we just take it."

But there was another much more striking thing said by the Minister of Agriculture. I think this was one of the most interesting and astonishing things ever said in this house. It does appear to be catching, as I shall show later in the afternoon—and it will not be much later, because I do not wish to indicate