

Supply—Finance

In 1958, the repayment of principal is deferred: there is no repayment. In 1965, the repayment of principal is deferred. Until when? We do not know, nothing is said about that. In 1966, the repayment of principal is deferred again.

In 1957, the interest due on December 31 amounted to \$22,300,000 and the payment was deferred, but we do not know until when.

In 1958, the interest due December 31 amounted to \$21,900,000 and the payment was deferred once more.

In 1965, the interest due December 31 amounted to \$19,600,000 and the payment was again deferred.

In 1966, the interest due December 31 amounted to \$19,200,000, and it was deferred again.

The total of the interest due amounted to \$83 million and the rate of interest is 2 per cent only. This means that, between 1947 and 1967, we should have had 20 repayments out of 50 yet the United Kingdom still owes us \$1,185 million.

In fact, they still owe us a principal of \$976,200,000, plus the \$83 million accrued interest that has not been paid yet or that was deferred. This makes up a total of about \$1,165 million at the end of 20 years. While we loaned them \$1,185 million in 20 years, they repaid only \$120 million at an interest rate of 2 per cent.

In the meantime, the hon. Minister of Finance is tearing his hair out because the interest rates are going up. He is paying this year, on Canada's debt, and in interest only, the amount of \$1,406 million, while we are lending to England at 2 per cent.

When Great Britain does not pay back any principal or interest, nothing is said. We are told: it is deferred. Till when? Nobody knows, it is just deferred. Seven or rather 12 payments deferred in 20 years!

Mr. Chairman, where are Canada's interests? In England or in Canada? It is no wonder that we find ourselves in the position so aptly described yesterday by the Minister of Finance when he spoke about lower employment, a decreased growth rate, more unemployment and more taxes. That is what Eric Kierans was saying to us in October 1967.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Chairman, when I see all those debts, I tell myself that Canadians, as we say, are always stung, in a country which does not even try to take its rightful place economically, but only to act according to

[Mr. Grégoire.]

the whims of mother-in-law, England. We have proof of that. While other countries owe us money, we find ourselves in the situation as described by the Minister of Finance yesterday.

Mr. Chairman, what we do not realize is precisely that Canada does not attempt to serve the interests of Canadians, it does not attempt to develop the Canadian economy, but rather endeavours to be the vassal of foreign interests. Our country does not try to develop a Canadian policy, but it is always oriented by a policy planned in Washington or in London. It does not attempt to develop its own identity, because it is always accepting what develops in England or in the United States.

Those are the reasons why I said that Quebec would gain by getting out as soon as possible, in order to avoid the seven plagues of Egypt of the Minister of Finance and establish its own economic, social and cultural policies and build its own identity.

[English]

Mr. Ballard: Mr. Chairman, I think the basis of the point I want to put across this afternoon can be clearly understood if we look at the present situation in this chamber. We are now discussing the finance estimates, yet the Minister of Finance is not in the house. I doubt very much that there is anybody in the house directly representing him. This bears out the contempt in which the minister holds opinions expressed by members of this house and by people who are authorities in the field of finance. I draw a distinction between members of the house and those who are authorities in finance. It seems evident to me that the minister is thoroughly convinced that no one but himself really understands the problems of this country.

We were pleased, as Canadians and as members of parliament, to hear the announcement just made by the Minister of Finance. The fact that the United States government has come to our assistance with a promise of financial support if we need it, and more particularly the fact that the restrictions that have been applied by the United States government in the field of foreign investment will not apply to Canada, make us happier. I am pleased to hear this because the area which I represent is very much involved with investment from the United States.