

The Budget—Mr. Perrault

good. The restraint on commercial construction that was introduced on June 3, 1969, and the two-year deferral of capital cost allowances on new commercial buildings will be continued. I would caution the government to watch centres like greater Vancouver, for example, where the boom is not all that superheated. If there should be any slowdown there, I hope the government will move quickly during the next few weeks to make sure that the situation does not deteriorate in that and other areas across Canada.

Today we were given two lectures—what I am about to say now is the gist of my message this evening—one delivered by the former Premier of the province of Nova Scotia, now leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (Mr. Stanfield). I am sure all of us were grateful that he had time to come back from his across-Canada white paper chase to address his remarks to us.

Mr. Baldwin: This is beginning to hurt you now, isn't it?

Mr. Perrault: The leader of that party had no solutions, no answers, no constructive proposals to assist the nation at this time. It was all unrelieved doom, doom and disaster. Those who waited for one single word of hope were disappointed. The Leader of the Official Opposition has become, without doubt, Canada's number one itinerant crepe-draper, when in fact he has a responsibility to suggest alternatives to government policy.

● (9:20 p.m.)

Modern opposition requires something more than the concept held out 100 years ago, that is, to oppose, oppose and oppose. The opposition must propose alternatives. But, really, what could one expect from a leader who produced some of Canada's highest unemployment figures when he was Premier of Nova Scotia? This is what the figures were when he was building his career as leader of the government of Nova Scotia: in 1958 the unemployment figure was 11.2 per cent, in 1959 it was 11.1 per cent, in 1960, it was 10.6 per cent, in 1961 it was 12.1 per cent, and in 1962 it was 10.6 per cent.

This is the man who is lecturing us on the subject of how to control inflation and create jobs. The financial critic of the official opposition and his leader have condemned the budget surplus as being something evil and unnecessary, yet for the last 13 years the hon. gentleman from Nova Scotia and his successor have made a virtue of budgets which

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have been consistently in the black, through the assistance of the federal government. What is today a vice on the part of the federal government has for years been a mark of virtue when practiced by the provincial Tory government.

The Conservative leader has suddenly emerged from his cocoon as the zealous apostle of tax reform in Canada. He is now claiming to be the dashing white major in the campaign against the white paper, and he says he is for what he terms sensible tax reforms. While the heavy air of Ottawa may have altered his perspective, while the Premier of Nova Scotia the hon. gentleman made no move to rescind or even to reform what is regarded as one of the most unfair and most iniquitous taxes known on this side of the Atlantic, the disreputable Nova Scotia poll tax which enables municipalities in the province to impose a poll tax on persons who earn so much a year—in most municipalities the amount is \$1,000, as my friend knows—but who do not pay property taxes.

During the hon. gentleman's tenure in Nova Scotia, as recently as two years ago this great tax reformer allowed Nova Scotians to be thrown into the jails of that province for poll tax arrears. Now he is the man who asks Canadians to have faith in his ability to lead them into the sunny uplands of a new and more equitable system of taxation. I think most Canadians are going to say, "No thank you." This is the man who condemns the budget and accuses this government of committing sins of omission and commission in respect of the management of Canadian affairs. This is the gentleman who has issued a sacred call to Canadians to throw the white paper into outer darkness, despite the fact that the residents of his own province would benefit perhaps more than those of any other province from the white paper reforms.

I think the leader of that great, historical party is being unreasonable in his criticisms of this budget, and I think he and his followers know they are being unreasonable. Surely this is the time when political advantage should give way to a reasonable and responsible effort to determine and to implement those proposals which are best for Canada at a time like this.

We heard from another leader this afternoon, a person I respect as I do the Leader of the Official Opposition because both in their own way have made a significant contribution to Canadian political life. The NDP leader