

The Address—Mr. Keeper

So some time this year the Minister of Finance has got to come face to face with the consequences of his engineering our defeat last December, and those consequences include his finding \$3 billion or \$4 billion in revenue. And the only place he will find that is in personal income tax, in stopping the indexing or something like that. There are no magic or golden pots in which he will find it. Or he will have to go back to the excise tax, he will have to look at all the tax reductions which have been made in the last ten or 15 years during which revenue was reduced by \$7.5 billion. He will have to listen to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) who has told him it is not there through cutbacks in expenditures, it must be got through increases in revenue.

At this stage we are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the country have seen what we have proposed, not short-term solutions but measures over three or four years to help this country. People will remember, and they are going to be waiting to see what the hon. ladies and gentlemen opposite will come up with during the rest of this year. The private sector is going to be waiting to find out whether they are going to be encouraged to do the things that have to be done to create wealth in this country. We are satisfied that when these comparisons are made, when the minister really comes in with a budget, that the one we brought in will stand a test and that, in three or four years time, the Canadian people will remember that while we may have been defeated we at least made a serious attempt to meet their problems and we were not afraid to face them even though we were in a minority, while on the other hand the majority opposite seem afraid to face the facts even though they appear safe and secure for four or five years.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg-St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a real privilege for me to be speaking here in this chamber this evening. It is an honour. It is not a question of privilege—it is simply a privilege. I should like to begin by asking the Chair to convey my congratulations to Madam Speaker upon her election. I think it will be good both for the equality of women in this country and for the country as a whole.

My first attempt to speak in this House was interrupted by this discussion of the financial affairs of the nation, so I should like to direct a couple of comments to the so-called budget.

● (2030)

My understanding is that last December 12 when we had a Progressive Conservative government and this House was dealing with a budget, the NDP put forward a motion on that budget calling for lower interest rates, for a reduction in taxes, and for a stimulation of the economy. The Liberals voted for that motion, and the government fell. Last night in the first statement by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) in this Parliament, he rejected all three of those measures for dealing with the economy. It certainly was not a very promising start for the Minister of Finance and offers very little hope to the country.

I would like to begin my remarks by thanking the people who sent me here. I am thinking, in the first instance, of the voters of my riding, Winnipeg-St. James. I would like to thank all those people who worked and helped to get me elected. I would also like to have the indulgence of this House to thank the New Democratic Party for my being here, for without that party it would not have been possible for me to be here, nor would there have been any purpose for my being here.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeper: There were many political personalities who assisted me in the recent election campaign, and I am sure that all those people, whom I will not mention, would join me in thanking one particular political personality for having helped this seat to fall within the NDP ranks. That person is—

An hon. Member: John Crosbie?

Mr. Keeper: —the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). To him I would like to pay particular thanks.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeper: My most deeply felt thanks for my being here tonight go to my family. I would like to thank my wife Lynne and my two boys for the sacrifices they have undertaken so that I can be here.

An hon. Member: What are the boys' names?

Mr. Keeper: David Samuel and Edward Stanley.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeper: Finally, by way of thanks I would like to thank the people of Canada for the opportunity to serve.

My riding of Winnipeg-St. James is a relatively new riding which includes part of the old riding which was represented by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and by J. S. Woodsworth before him. This riding was represented in the last House by Bob Lane, who lived in the riding, as I have, and who is a realtor and a local businessman. I know that Bob did his best to represent the people of that riding, and I hope to do my best as well.

The reason I am in politics and in this House now is that I believe democracy can be made to work. By that I mean that the will of the people can be made to be felt and that the needs of the people can be met. I believe that democracy does not just happen but that it must be made to function. That is why we are here. If we can make it function, then we hold out the possibility for the full flowering of the human person.

The riding I represent contains a great variety of people. It is an urban riding, and I would like to take note of the various groupings which exist in it. There is a fairly large number of small business people in my riding who, at the present time, are suffering from the high level of interest rates. The riding contains a considerable number of working people, both organized and unorganized, who are suffering most particularly hard from unemployment at this time. Students make up a