

*The Budget—Mr. Tolmie*

concern seems to be with French Canada, something which might not be acceptable to all members. I must tell him that he ought to consider members of other ethnic groups when considering appointments to cabinet. For instance, how many years has the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) been here? He has been here since 1953. How much more capable a man do you need, Mr. Speaker? What more do you want? He speaks English, French and Polish, and does everything well. However, he does not fit in with the attitude of the Prime Minister. I must say that the Prime Ministers' attitude must be considered as anti-ethnic. That is my assessment of the situation. He has never proved to me that he is willing to appoint members of certain ethnic groups to cabinet or other positions. He has never felt that people coming from certain other groups have the necessary qualifications. I must say these things, Mr. Speaker, because, although my time in this House might be limited, I am going to say those things that I want to say while I am here.

**Mr. D. R. Tolmie (Welland):** Mr. Speaker, before briefly alluding to the budget itself, I think it only just and proper that a few minutes be taken to recount some of the solid achievements of this government in the economic sphere. I believe that those achievements have brought great benefits to literally millions of Canadians.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Benefits like unemployment and inflation. The hon. member's speech ought to last only a couple of minutes.

**Mr. Tolmie:** With our preoccupation with unemployment and inflation, with criticism, sometimes unwarranted and intemperate, of government economic policies, the government's real concern for the Canadian people has not received proper publicity. The government has been castigated as a heartless ogre which unfeelingly, in a mechanical, rigid way, needlessly threw thousands of Canadians out of work with all the resultant human misery and suffering in a vain battle against inflation. The image which some are deliberately trying to create and foster is that of an arrogant, ruthless government working with cool precision but no warmth or compassion for the Canadian people. This assessment of government economic policies is blatantly wrong.

What are the true facts. What is this government's record in the economic realm. What evidence is there of this gross lack of compassion and feeling for the little man? Time does not permit a recital of government accomplishments, but here are a few items which should torpedo the unfair portrayal of this government and prove to the contrary that our government in a few short years has shown more concern for the welfare of Canadians generally than perhaps any other government since confederation.

Have we forgotten, for example, what this government has done for our war veterans? Do hon. members not know that Canada and France are the only two countries in the western world that have ministers of veterans affairs? I think that has been alluded to in previous

[Mr. Korchinski.]

speeches. We recently increased disability pensions by 10 per cent and allowances by 15 per cent.

Have we forgotten what this government is doing in the field of housing. National housing loans have been increased and made more available to the low income earner. A concerted effort to provide low cost public housing has been made. A special \$200 million low cost housing program was commenced and federal support for housing now has passed the \$1 billion figure. Certainly, this evinces a concern for the people of Canada. Surely, much more can be done; we realize that. However, the government is aware of the essential need for housing and is continually revising and trying to bolster those policies and trying to implement proper policies for the benefit of all Canadians in the field of housing.

Have we forgotten, for example, what this government has recently done for the unemployed by the passage of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Coverage will become universal. Benefit rates will be substantially increased with the maximum benefit of \$100 per week. Benefits will be extended to those who suffer loss of income due to sickness, pregnancy and retirement.

What about our senior citizens? Has this government ignored their plight? Recently, for those in need, the government increased the guaranteed supplement for single pensioners from \$105 a month to \$135 and for married pensioners up to \$255 a month. I feel, however, that the government should take a hard look at the flat rate pension of \$80 a month with a view to an increase; and, certainly there should be a fair cost of living increase included in the basic pension.

What about our youth seeking summer work? I realize there has been criticism of the summer youth programs, but the fact remains that the government instituted a program. It acted promptly to meet a pressing problem. Certainly, there were mistakes; but the net result is good and this program is providing work and hope for thousands of young Canadians. The initial student program, a \$58 million project which has since been increased, is designed to involve as many as half a million students in meaningful jobs, travel and other activities this summer.

What about the consumer? Has this government shown a callous disregard for their interests? Amendments to the Bills of Exchange Act will, for the first time, provide a legal defence if a financial institution sues for non-payment but the original seller of the goods has defaulted on his part of the bargain. The consumer packaging and labelling bill is designed to facilitate choice among consumer products by providing better information and to help reduce confusion in the market place. It will control packing practices, including proliferation of package sizes, which can confuse or mislead consumers. The weights and measures bill and the Hazardous Products Act will give additional protection to the consumer. All these measures indicate a deep concern for the health and welfare of the consumer—in effect, every Canadian.

Have we forgotten what this government has done in the war against pollution of our environment. The