

*The Budget—Hon. J. P. Côté*

**Mr. Côté (Longueuil):** Mr. Speaker, I am not submitting a resolution to the house at this time. I am not trying to do by the back door what I could not do by the front door. This is only a speech on the budget and I think this occasion is very important, Mr. Speaker, because we can discuss the revenues and the expenses of the government.

[English]

**Mr. Nasserden:** On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Postmaster General at the beginning of his remarks was actually reflecting on a decision already taken by the house.

**Mr. Byrne:** You did not raise the point of order then.

**Mr. Nasserden:** It is still a point of order. What he has been saying since is substantiating the accusation he made at that time and so is part of the original reflection on a decision already taken by the house.

[Translation]

**Mr. Côté (Longueuil):** Mr. Speaker, I never accused anyone. I simply took my responsibilities, and if the resolution was not passed, as I said at the outset of my remarks, that did not reflect on anyone. I never accused the opposition of anything, and I can take my own responsibilities.

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. When the Postmaster General was making his remarks earlier I did not interpret them as being a reflection on a vote of the house and I am sure he did not intend them to be so. However, I should say to him that we are engaged in the budget debate and I am sure he will confine his remarks to the financial matters that are before the house.

**Mr. Côté (Longueuil):** That is exactly what I am trying to do, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

For the last part of the 1967-68 fiscal year handling costs will exceed anticipated revenues for first-class mail. Our figures—I mean our forecast for first-class mail, in 1968-69, except for international airmail—show a \$17 million deficit. Those figures apply to the cost of handling letters and indicate that cost will exceed anticipated revenues at the present rates. The total deficit foreseen for 1968-69, on the basis of the present rates, is \$96 million and we want to reduce it to \$55 million.

So, Mr. Speaker, I submit that it was with a full knowledge of the facts, that that resolution was worked out and introduced in the house. I knew, at the time, that it would not be a popular move, but I also knew where my duty and my responsibilities lay—

[English]

**Mr. Churchill:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Twice your attention has been called to this minister using the device of the budget debate to make excuses for the failure of his presentation of a resolution which the house defeated some time ago. I think this is quite contrary to the rules. He is now debating a matter which was debated and settled by the house. A decision was reached with regard to it and he should not be raising it again now.

• (5:40 p.m.)

[Translation]

**Mr. Côté (Longueuil):** Mr. Speaker, every time the Postmaster General brings his estimates or any proposal before the house, he is always asked for additional information.

Members want to know why the Post Office Department had 41,000 employees in 1962-63 and has 48,000 in 1967-68. They also want to know why it was possible to balance the budget in 1962-63, whereas a \$96 million deficit is anticipated in 1968-69.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, it is very important for all members, on either side of the house, to obtain as much information as possible.

I said at the outset that I only had myself to blame if the resolution was rejected by the house.

**Mr. Lambert:** Do not talk about that resolution.

**Mr. Côté (Longueuil):** You are the one who is talking about it, not me.

**Mr. Lambert:** No, it is the minister who is referring to it, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

**Mr. Churchill:** The government house leader should have helped you out but he was asleep too.

**Mr. Côté (Longueuil):** No, Mr. Speaker; I take the responsibility for that.

[Translation]

I must first answer for my duties and my responsibilities.