

The Budget—Mr. Stanfield

put before parliament, is the package that was outlined yesterday by my colleague, the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies).

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The package is comprised of two significant thrusts, and I cannot emphasize too strongly that we are talking about these two thrusts operating simultaneously as a unit. We would not have put them forward in such a way that either one of them could have been considered as optional. They are not in any way independent or separable. We would have introduced them in budget form as a package to operate simultaneously to respond to the two simultaneous problems facing Canadians at this time—persistent high levels of unemployment and price escalations that have reached serious proportions in terms of generating an over-all inflation psychology. We believe it is time, indeed long past time, for strong action against unemployment. The thrust which we would have presented to attack unemployment would have been unquestionably more effective than the ad hoc measures which were presented in the budget of the Minister of Finance. The plan to promote Canadian investment in Canadian small business—the plan which I put forward during the election campaign—would have been a fundamental part of this package.

Other expansionary measures which were outlined yesterday by the hon. member for Don Valley would have added to the job thrust so that parliament could have dealt with a budget truly expansionary in a dollar sense, and, more important, truly expansionary in terms of actions and programs specifically designed to directly stimulate creation of the number of jobs required to reduce unemployment quickly and substantially in our country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: No one can question the need to fight unemployment. We believe it is also time for strong action against inflation because we believe that expectation levels are seriously high and, on the other hand, the credibility and trust appraisals of this government are seriously low. We believe that such action must be effectively combined with strong action to stimulate job creation. We believe that Canadians would accept and support such a two-thrust budget package at this time. We believe that Canadians would endure the discomfort and inconvenience of a freeze and temporary controls program if they felt that dramatic results could be achieved in reducing unemployment as well as in restoring order to the price side of the economy. In the package we would have presented, the time span involved would have been in the order of 18 months to two years with goals spelled out in relation to unemployment and inflation. If we had received approval of our package in this House the nation would have the benefit of a well-defined game plan based upon generating opportunity and restoring order in a decisive way, a way which we still believe should be the Canadian way.

But the fact is that in this budget there is no program of national development, no new initiative or fresh inspiration, no delineation of priorities for government action in

[Mr. Stanfield.]

the seventies, no objectives for the nation to strive towards, no goals to seek and no national purpose to achieve. This is a government not only bankrupt in policy but bereft of leadership. The government and this budget have this in common: both are timid, both lack the courage of conviction and the strength to persevere. There are those in the House who have obviously persuaded themselves that this budget will effect substantial improvements in the Canadian economy and in the lives of the Canadian people. We in this party are not among them. We are convinced that this budget is grossly inadequate, and because of that belief and because we think the government is completely untrustworthy and we have no confidence at all in their statements as to what they are going to do, what they are for or against—we do not know that they believe in anything—because of the gross inadequacy of the budget, we propose to vote against it and to vote against the authors of that budget.

• (1240)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: After all, we have our own judgment which has been vindicated by events in the recent past, especially with regard to the economic policy. Those who now support the government, will of course do so because they believe that within the lifetime of the effective application of this budget the Canadian economy will respond and be immeasurably improved. We do not believe that, Sir, and as the events unfold, we should be able to see quite clearly who has been right and who has been wrong.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes I have before we are called to the other place may I say, first, that I listened to the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) on Wednesday who spoke as one financial critic for the Conservative party. Unfortunately, I could not listen to the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) yesterday but I read his speech this morning. I find I have a difficulty, sir, which I had hoped the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) would clear up for me. My difficulty is to know which of those two gentlemen was speaking for the Conservative party.

Some hon. Members: Both.

Mr. Lewis: If the suggestion of the hon. members to my right was that they were both speaking for the party, may I suggest to them that there was absolutely no relationship between the reactionary nonsense which the hon. member for Edmonton West spoke on Wednesday and the almost sensible suggestions which the hon. member for Don Valley made yesterday. I mention that at the start, Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition was eloquent today in his condemnation of everybody concerned, and emphasized in particular the fact that the government opposite was not to be trusted. I agree with him entirely.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: I have not changed my mind about the performance of this government since 1968 one bit, and I