

The Budget—Mr. Benidickson

Mr. Benidickson: The Canadian club; I stand corrected. Invariably, in the first two weeks of January, the minister makes a statement of this kind. He calls it his review of the economic situation. It usually contains a review and a forecast; his Toronto friends sometimes get it before anything so complete comes to the House of Commons. However, on this occasion the Minister of Finance said that we started this session early. He said though it was not an emergency session and there was nothing of very great emergency in the country at that time. This has been the attitude of the Minister of Finance all along in these serious times.

I could continue to quote the minister and the trade ministers. They were divided in this instance. My friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce, of course, joined the Minister of Finance in such attitude. At the end of the year 1960 he went on a national hook-up and said that everything was wonderful. The Minister of Labour did the same thing. This does not impress the Canadian people when all should be working together to consider the dips and troughs in our Canadian economy that were so obvious at the time those rosy pre-budget statements were being made.

Of course the Minister of Trade and Commerce changed his mind. He is very versatile. A month had not elapsed before he went out and made another speech, in which he rather contradicted the Minister of Finance. He said, "Things will be worse before they get better". This was not the kind of optimism that was expressed at the finance minister's banquet in Toronto earlier in January 1961.

Mr. Hees: Would the hon. member mind quoting that reference. I would appreciate it if he would, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Benidickson: Does the minister deny it?

Mr. Hees: I cannot remember making that statement. I would appreciate it if the hon. member would quote the reference.

Mr. Benidickson: Does the minister say he did not say it?

Mr. Hees: I am asking the hon. member to quote what I said, because he said I said it. I ask him either to quote it or take it back.

Mr. Benidickson: You said it, all right.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): On a point of order—

Mr. Hees: I do not remember it, and I should like the hon. member to quote it.

Mr. Benidickson: The minister makes so many speeches he cannot remember what he said.

[Mr. Hees.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River is speaking on behalf of the opposition following the budget speech. The last half hour, Mr. Speaker, while you were not in the chair, sir, we have had persistent, ill-mannered, unbecoming interruptions by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I think you should caution the Minister of Trade and Commerce that this is conduct not becoming a minister of the crown.

Mr. Benidickson: May I say that I have already excused the minister.

Mr. Hees: The hon. member for Essex East resents anyone usurping his role as the interrupter in chief of the House of Commons. All I was saying to the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River is that he has said that I said certain things, and I ask him to give the quotation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chevrier: The minister has no right to do this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Speaker has indicated before that hon. members should not interrupt the member who has the floor unless he yields. I think at times the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River has yielded the floor. If he feels that he should not be interrupted, then he is perfectly entitled to continue—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There was no justification at all for the remarks of the Minister of Trade and Commerce—

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Speaker, I indicated—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. member insists on keeping the floor he is entitled to it. I would ask hon. members to allow the hon. member who has the floor to continue his speech.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Speaker, I say that this is background to the presentation of the 1960-61 budget. It is indicative of the complacency about which I complain. We thought if the 1961-62 budget was not brought forward—and it is a very important guide to businessmen across this land, particularly in times of stress—if we had a very unusual delay, the content would be helpful to the economy and impressive. I say the contrary is the case. The impressive part is the fact that we are to have a cash deficit of about \$1 billion. This is the fifth deficit presented by the Minister of Finance.

There was a very interesting and short but important proviso in the minister's budget statement last Tuesday night when he referred to the fact that at long last a decision had been made at the governmental level to take the