

The Budget—Mr. Matte

are not as attuned to the problems of the Canadian people as we could be, and this goes for me too.

I will not continue at any great length because I hope to have another chance before the next four years are over to elaborate on some of my points. However, I will say that if we do not get some action quickly—and this is my candid feeling and my feeling deep down on this—and if we do not have a government which will show some gumption by taking issue with some of the economic problems facing our nation, then there will be more danger of disunity in Canada than we already have.

I will conclude by saying that I would never get involved in an argument or fight with anyone. In fact, I would laugh at a Newfie joke about me or at anyone reflecting on my accent or my general background, but I would certainly fight if I had no chance to provide a livelihood for my family. I think this is the attitude of most Canadians.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit me to ask him a simple and easy question. Does he realize that since 1963 when the Liberal government decided to spend some money on the Atlantic Development Board the sum of \$60,728,000 has been committed for Newfoundland, \$54,892,000 has been committed on New Brunswick, \$12,566,000 has been committed on Prince Edward Island, and \$59,134 has been committed in Nova Scotia—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, may I—

Mr. Benson:—and \$2,198,000 for the Atlantic Region in general for a total commitment in the Atlantic provinces of \$189,512,000.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Speaker, may I say in reply that when one can draw this kind of response from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) one realizes immediately that the minister must have got his toes hurt a little. Perhaps I am wrong, perhaps there is no unemployment problem in Canada. This might just be a dirty rumour spread by a lot of people out of work. Perhaps there is no regional disparity in Canada. This may be another dirty rumour spread by many Canadians who cannot find a dollar with which to feed their families. I may be wrong entirely. If I am wrong I will be the first to apologize, but if the minister is wrong I will demand the same kind of courtesy from him.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a point of privilege.

Mr. Stanfield: On what point?

Mr. Benson: I thank the hon. member for his concern about unemployment. I can assure him that ours is just as great, but I consider \$200 million committed in the maritime provinces since 1963 a rather substantial amount.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) but I wonder if we wish this debate to continue.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I just want to draw your attention to the fact that the Minister of Finance is abusing the rules of the house.

Mr. Benson: And so is the Leader of the Opposition.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, the Ralliement créditiste is conscious of the inflationary dangers faced by Canada and it wishes to make its contribution in order to find remedies while the government at this time seems to be running out of effective solutions.

On May 8 last, when several hon. members were asking the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) what measures the government intended to take in order to curb the increase in the cost of living, the Leader of the Ralliement créditiste (Mr. Caouette), in turn, asked the Prime Minister whether he would not consider the serious suggestions made in the house by the Ralliement créditiste and this is what the right hon. Prime Minister answered at that time, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, I think that all those who know about such things agree that the suggestions coming from the Créditiste system are, essentially, of an inflationary nature and inflation is precisely what we are trying to fight.

It should be noted that the Prime Minister did not say that his government was going to fight inflation, he simply said that they were going to try.

It will be a test, an attempt, because the Prime Minister knows fully well that he has no assurance of success since the means available to him have never been successful; they have always failed, while prices keep going up, salaries and actual income are subject to erosion and the savings and all forms of ownership are undermined.