

*The Budget—Mr. Andras*

At the moment there appears to be a breakthrough in the matter on condominium housing and the provinces, with the assistance of the federal government, should give it every encouragement. There are many retired couples living in large homes today who do not want to lose their security of ownership. If condominium housing was available, these people would retain their security of ownership, at the same time freeing their present homes for larger families.

Seventh, Mr. Speaker, we would remove the sales tax on residential homes costing up to \$25,000. This would be done in the form of an abatement. We would not remove the sales tax for the more expensive homes or other buildings.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Eighth, the mortgage limit with respect to older homes should be increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000, to make the provisions of the act work and to revive competition between private lenders.

Ninth, we should encourage home improvement loans in every possible way. The big dip has occurred with regard to housing improvement loans.

The members of the New Democratic party feel, Mr. Speaker, that the measures I have outlined will help to ease the housing crisis and will go a long way to guarantee to the average Canadian the fulfilment of a basic right, that of decent housing.

**Mr. R. K. Andras (Port Arthur):** Mr. Speaker, neither of the important measures that the government has announced, the raising of taxes and the cut-back in expenditures, can be described, by any stretch of the imagination, as politically popular measures. I think hon. members must agree that in taking such action the government displayed a great deal of political courage. That the measures were proposed and adopted shows a deep sense of responsibility on the part of the members of the government.

By introducing such measures, the government provided an opening for the opposition parties to criticize the government. The opposition parties have seized on this opening and through their criticisms have indulged in political opportunism. It might be said that the government is always fair game for the opposition, and that the duty of the opposition is to oppose and to criticize. The opposition also has a responsibility to say, in specific terms, what programs should be substituted for those that are undertaken by the government.

[Mr. Gilbert.]

Most remarks that I have heard opposition members make have consisted of generalizations. Anyone reading *Hansard* for the last few days will have difficulty in pinning down to concrete terms the criticisms of the opposition. In fact, in its remarks it has shown a considerable inconsistency. On the one hand it has piously decried what it terms as profligate government spending and, on the other hand, with respect of certain programs it has recommended and demanded more government spending.

This afternoon, the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Comtois) spoke of members of the opposition who had asked the government to increase expenditures on certain programs. I wish to add to what he said. The examples I shall cite are culled from *Hansard* over the last three and a half to four months.

On September 25, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Chatterton) moved to adjourn the house under standing order 26. At that time he suggested that the government increase expenditures on housing and remove the 11 per cent sales tax. Also on September 25, as reported on page 2430 of *Hansard*, the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) recommended that the government pay increased pensions to retired civil servants.

On September 26 the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Patterson) asked for increased loans to be granted for agricultural fairs. Also in September many members of the opposition—the hon. member for Kent (Ont.) (Mr. Danforth), the hon. member for Middlesex West (Mr. Thomas) and the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. McCutcheon)—requested extended feed grain freight subsidies to Ontario producers.

On October 3 the hon. member for Queens-Lunenburg (Mr. Crouse) asked for a second ferry service between Nova Scotia and New England. On October 5 the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) asked for assistance to be given to the herring fishery. On October 13 the hon. member for Queens (Mr. Macquarrie) recommended, that the government invest in a second national park on Prince Edward Island. On October 19 the hon. member for Prince (Mr. MacDonald) opposed the closing of the air base at Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

On October 23 the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot (Mr. Ricard) requested that financial assistance be given by the federal government to the city of Montreal for metro extension construction. May I also cite the