

Anti-Inflation Act

Mr. Stanfield: I hope so, because you need to be brought to order in some way.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) objects to my making a speech, but I am going to go ahead anyway.

An hon. Member: When is he going to make a speech?

Mr. Trudeau: On Monday.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I will deal with the Prime Minister after I have demolished the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald). During the course of this debate I intend to make some comments about the Minister of Finance in his capacity as a lawyer and in relation to some of the provisions of this bill. I say this to him to begin with, that he has at least learned something. If one has a weak case, one concentrates on irrelevant issues, and that is exactly what the Minister of Finance has done.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us one of the most important bills of all those that have been placed before parliament for a great many years, probably since the last war. I intend to say something about its values later on. At the same time, we have a Minister of Finance who has failed miserably, abjectly and utterly to defend the bill or to explain those provisions about which some of us are deeply concerned. He spent most of his time engaged in a scurrilous attack on the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), the leader of the NDP and other members.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You know that is true.

Mr. Baldwin: This minister has failed to meet the test by dealing in plain and honest terms with this extremely important measure. I am sure his predecessor would not have failed to do that. There is every indication that this minister has not done that because he cannot, and perhaps he cannot because his heart is not in it.

An hon. Member: He just doesn't understand it.

Mr. Baldwin: It is rather interesting to note that in his preface the minister went into the matter of the constituents in his own riding having to pay tremendous increases in rentals for housing accommodation. I suggest to the minister that this is a responsibility which he and his colleagues must bear. During the time that this difficult situation has been developing—I refer to the difficulties in respect of inflation which have now occurred—members of this party and others in this House have put forward suggestions and propositions. Many were put forward during the last election campaign and even before that time; but the trouble was that a group of bloodless zombies masquerading as a cabinet did not have the guts to do anything about the situation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Is that a scurrilous attack?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Mr. Baldwin: That is a fair description, in a political sense, of that group of people sitting opposite me; and I am speaking in a political sense. It pains me to have to say this, Mr. Speaker, but I think it is rather interesting to note that what we have heard from the Minister of Finance today is a preview of his next budget. He has talked about government objectives, and I think we have an indication of what is likely to be in his next budget, if this minister should survive that long.

An hon. Member: He will resign before then.

Mr. Baldwin: What else can we take from this minister's statement? We are faced with an exceedingly complicated and difficult problem, with its pressures upon so many sectors of our economy. This is a problem which will require co-operation from all segments of our society, particularly the provinces and the municipalities. Is this proposed government co-operation to be achieved by the kind of comments made by the minister today? Will that kind of comment result in the kind of conciliation, understanding and co-operation that is required? Is this the kind of thing we are going to hear throughout this land from the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and others in the government? If that is the case, then with all the good will in the world I doubt that the government will be successful.

While we have most grave reservations about this legislation in its present form, we want a program to be put in place by this parliament which will work to do something about the inflation that has plagued the people of Canada for altogether too long.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: I admonish the minister and suggest to him that he find a more conciliatory and reasonable approach in dealing with the people of Canada, starting with the members of this House and carrying on to include provincial governments and those segments of the labour and business communities with which he will be dealing. I suggest to the Prime Minister that otherwise he should buy a muzzle and make it available to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might call it one o'clock, as this seems to be an appropriate time?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, having had time to reflect during the lunch hour, I feel I dealt a little too harshly with the Minister of Finance, particularly in one instance. The Minister of Finance has lightened the labours of myself and other members of our party by making it crystal clear that the program envisaged in the legislation and the guidelines which have been presented to this House in the form of a white paper are completely distinct