

Anti-Inflation Act

Mr. Grafftey: Apart from the freezing of the bureaucracy, the freezing of expenditures, and the cuts in taxation which should be a part of this budget to be brought down in six weeks, the package must inaugurate a whole area of incentives, tax and otherwise, to get the economy moving again. This means more Canadians being able to own their own homes, or own small businesses; it means more Canadians being able to buy farms or stay on their farms.

Not least important, the new budget must make room for certain provisions to encourage Canadians to invest in Canadian enterprises, be it in equities or in any other way. As a Progressive Conservative I believe that democracy is well served when an individual citizen is encouraged to have an ownership stake in his country. Under doctrinaire Trudeau socialism, conventional wisdom is that the government should own and control everything. That is one of the reasons why we are in the mess in which we find ourselves today and are obliged to resort to this kind of negative legislation.

I have tried to articulate in general outline a constructive conservative economic philosophy as opposed to the Trudeau socialism we are getting. But in the social field this budget should have many positive things to say about housing. For instance, it should provide for the complete elimination of the sales tax on building materials and for tax exemptions, if you will, in respect of mortgage interest payments and local property tax payments. And, I would add, in co-operation with the private sector, especially in large metropolitan areas, there should be provision for setting up land banks.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would say we hope this legislation, be it ever so late, will do something to alleviate a situation which is largely of the government's own making.

An hon. Member: Rubbish!

Mr. Grafftey: An hon. member says "rubbish". I am not sure he can spell it, but he says it. We shall be offering amendments and we hope for the good of Canada that members opposite, especially those on the treasury benches, will view those amendments in a bipartisan spirit, because we would not want it to fail two years from now and then have the dubious honour of saying "We told you so." I say once again that the program cannot work in a vacuum in the absence of a clear indication to the Canadian people that the government is serious about co-ordinating a fiscal and monetary policy to go along with it. If we all work together in a spirit of harmony across this House I am sure much can be done to confront the grave economic problems which are facing the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that on entering this debate I should make some comment about certain of the things which have been said by other participants in it. The comments of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat were somewhat confusing to me. If I understood him rightly he said we were interfering with the economy too much. Then he went on to say we should be directing the economy to a greater extent than we are. He talked about private enterprise, and I could not help thinking of that

[Mr. Grafftey.]

great private enterprise province called Alberta, one which has more socialist ownership than any other region in Canada and which is daily extending this ownership under the present government out there.

One or two members made comments about cabinet ministers using the executive jet fleet we have. I think I should put it on record just how many aircraft we have in this great executive jet fleet. We have three Jet Stars, of which two were bought at the time the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) was prime minister of this country in 1962; I am told they were kept in the hangars all through that year for some unknown reason—I do not know whether it was to curtail inflation or whether they were scared to use them. The third was bought second hand by the right hon. gentleman's successor, the late Mr. Pearson, when he was prime minister. That is the jet executive fleet that we have. All of these aircraft are older than 12 years.

• (2120)

Then I come to the other great executive fleet. The hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Bawden) knows some of these planes very well. He traded in his old King Aire on a new plane, and it is available for cabinet ministers to fly in when it is not broken down. Then there are two other aircraft. They are Viscounts; one is 23 years of age and the other 24. They are kept, I am told, in top flying shape at all times but you can use them only for short trips, and so on, within the immediate area of Ottawa. Then there are the small Falcons owned by the military and which military pilots use to get in their flying hours. So they might as well fly us, as fly around just to get in their hours.

In protection of all the people who use these planes let me say this. The hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave) was at the meeting the other night when I mentioned the fact that the wind nearly blew us off the runway when we came in to land at the airport at Medicine Hat. The expert pilot immediately gunned the motor and we came round again with a little more force and landed. No one on the plane knew that he was having any difficulty at all. I do not believe he was because he had the aircraft under full control. The aircraft blew out a tire, but we did not even know about this until we pulled up in front of the little terminal at Medicine Hat. The pilots who fly both the military planes and the old Jet Stars make sure they are in as good a shape as possible, and they are pretty darned careful with them.

I used a little Falcon when I went on official government business to the Balkan countries just recently. Do you know what the common comment was when we pulled up in front of the terminal, Mr. Speaker? It was: "How come you come from such a big country and you have such a little airplane?" I said that we had a problem in Canada called inflation and that we would not be buying any new airplanes until we were in a position to say that we had cured inflation. Even these planes have to be constantly under surveillance to make sure they are in proper flying condition. The military crews do as excellent a job as the DOT crews as far as I am concerned, and I feel perfectly safe in their hands. Actually I feel safer there in these old planes that we use, which people call the jet fleet, than I do in a car on the highways.