

The Budget—Mr. Benidickson

I suggest the government should have arranged, in a preliminary form at least, the orders in council in respect to this legislation even before it was passed by this house. However, the order in council in that regard was not ready until January 19, 1961, a month later.

This measure was supposed to be an important factor in creating winter employment. However, this is the kind of nonchalant attitude the government has in respect to economic matters, which I feel justifies the criticism this administration has received particularly during the past year at a time when unemployment has been heavier than in any year since the thirties.

I can cite other illustrations. In connection with small business loans I charge the government that there was the usual administrative inefficiency in getting the orders out and the paper work done. In connection with the small businesses loans measure, the minister said that a substantial number of dollars had now been loaned. This has been done after the period during which people were looking for winter work. We were informed that this \$65 million would become available very quickly, presumably in the winter. However, the last time he made a return to this house, at the end of April I believe, only about \$4 million had been loaned under this program.

I am now looking at the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I give him good marks for some of his activities. He has been endeavouring to be the cheerleader promoting exports in connection with export trade. I think he is to be commended for the publicity and attention that he has aroused. But publicity is not enough. I recall that the Minister of Trade and Commerce really blew his top in regard to publicity last November with this unemployment crisis approaching. At that time he announced that there was a billion dollar proposition coming up soon to finance export trade.

Mr. Hees: Could I ask the hon. member to produce that statement from which he is quoting, in which I am supposed to have made that remark; because I do not recall it.

Mr. Benidickson: I have not got it with me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Benidickson: I have read that statement, and I have asked a question about it in this house. I asked the minister why, after all these months, this legislation was not available.

Mr. Hees: What legislation are you referring to?

Mr. Benidickson: I am referring to the Export Credits Insurance Act amendments. I

also asked the minister a question in connection with the counterpart, the private company arranged by the banks, and why that seemed to be at a standstill.

Mr. Hees: I should like to say to the member that he is hopelessly confused because nothing has been at a standstill. The whole thing has been going ahead very satisfactorily, as the businessmen of this country will tell the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Speaker, I think two days ago the minister himself said during the debate on the resolution, which he only introduced last week, that the China wheat deal which has received a great deal of prominence might have been financed through the utilization of this legislation. Of course it was not because the act, without the amendments, did not have adequate financial backing to take care of a deal of that magnitude.

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, the hon. member continues to quote me incorrectly. I said this thing could have been done but was not done for the reason that—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Pickersgill: Take your turn in the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the minister feels he is not being properly quoted he will have the opportunity later to make an explanation. However, if the hon. member who has the floor yields the floor, that would be in order.

Mr. Chevrier: That is his way of making a contribution to this debate.

Mr. Benidickson: Mr. Speaker, I should like to bring hon. members up to date as to the thinking of the Minister of Finance. Despite the fact that some of this unemployment legislation was before us this session it did not move very fast last winter during the serious unemployment situation. I refer the Minister of Finance to the annual budget, which I describe as his pre-budget or advance budget, which he gives to friends annually in Toronto in January at the forum of the Toronto board of trade.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The board of trade?

Mr. Benidickson: The Canadian club.

Mr. Hees: Get a few of these things right.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I have not spoken to the board of trade.

Mr. Hees: Get the odd thing right. We do not ask you to get everything right; we know you cannot.