

*The Budget—Mr. Andre*

the Dean of Management Studies of the largest university in the country.

How Hon. Members opposite and members of the business community who pronounce themselves satisfied with the budget can remain satisfied in view of that kind of future is beyond my comprehension. They either do not agree or cannot see that far in advance. Perhaps they have not stopped to think beyond this year and next year about the consequences that kind of spending or that kind of deficit will have on the future of the country.

By the end of this year or next year this budget may help; that has to be acknowledged. The changes that affect business may help, and perhaps we can anticipate that next year things may not be bad. I guess it is pretty safe to say that is likely to be the time of an election. We have an election budget that says, "To hell with the unemployed this year, we are not going to do anything about them. The heck with the future two years or more ahead which fills any sensible Canadian with terror. What we have to worry about is next year because that is when we are going to the polls. The country's future is not nearly as important as the election of the Liberal Party. That has to be the first priority of any Liberal Minister of Finance—to turn things around to get the Party re-elected. If that means putting the economic future of the country in jeopardy, so be it; if that means keeping two million people unemployed this year, so be it. It is cheap at the price to sacrifice those Canadians and to sacrifice the future of the country if you can put together a budget that will make things look nice about the time we have to go to the public to ask for their vote." That is what we have here, Mr. Speaker. That is what we have been getting and that is why the country is in such a mess today.

One of the major reasons we got into this mess is attributable to the skills the Liberal Party has shown in public relations and flim-flam. Let me give an example. Once upon a time in this country and today in most decently run countries, companies or families, a budget consisted of a revenue and expenditure plan. A family or business assessed their revenues, and on that basis put together an anticipated expenditure plan. A family would look after groceries, housing, education, and if anything was left over, it would be saved or perhaps spent on a vacation. Things are a little more complicated for companies. They think about investing for the future and perhaps having to borrow for that. They think about cash flows, whether they will have to borrow for that and what would be needed to pay that debt off in future. Most countries run things that way. Certainly that is how things are done in the United States. In January each year the Government presents a plan to Congress containing a revenues side and an expenditures side. The elected representatives of the people in Congress study it, amend it, change it for six months and then, at the end of October it becomes law.

In this country we separated these two functions as if expenditures and revenue saving had nothing to do with each other—as if they were totally separate considerations and you did not have to worry about expenditures when talking about

revenue, and vice versa. We have come to the current absurdity today where there is no relationship between the Government's spending plans and its ability to raise the revenue to finance those plans. So we look at each part of the equation as an exercise in public relations, as a political exercise, as a flim-flam exercise.

• (1740)

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, on February 27, 1983, as required by the Standing Orders, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) tabled before this House the Estimates of Government expenditures for this year. He stood up and formally declared to this House that the Government remained committed to restraint. It had done a careful job of assessing how much money will be spent this year and it was holding it down to a mere 9.6 per cent increase, \$85.62 billion, but only a 9.6 per cent increase, showing its concern for restraint. We asked the Minister, what about Supplementary Estimates which might come on during the rest of the year, and we were told, "Don't worry. We have a reserve to take care of that. We are confident that the 9.6 per cent increase is accurate. We are confident in our numbers. We are restraining expenditures. Don't worry." We accused the Minister of flim-flaming the House. He said, "That is not true. Those are our spending plans, not one penny more. We are being very careful." Well, Mr. Speaker, what happened on Tuesday evening not quite two months later? The Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) stands and in essence says the President of the Treasury Board misled us two months earlier. In essence he said that the President of the Treasury Board did not know what he was talking about when he told us that he was presenting the Government's spending plans, because the Government's spending plans were not \$85.6 billion, as the President of the Treasury Board solemnly assured us they would be. They had gone up to \$90 billion. Actually, on Monday night it was only \$89.8 billion, but because the Minister of Finance was caught misbehaving, violating his oath of secrecy, we suddenly had another \$200 million. Suddenly, just out of the blue, there is another \$200 million. The President of the Treasury Board said, "We are careful with your money. We look at every penny. We don't spend what we don't have. We are committed to restraint." The Minister of Finance then stands and says, "Oh, well, we are throwing in another \$200 million because I don't want to be made out as having leaked the budget, which I did, I know, because of the oath of secrecy which I technically have not violated because I changed things which I have a right to do right up to the last minute."

**Mr. Fisher:** Which he does. He has the right.

**Mr. Andre:** The Parliamentary Secretary will soon have a nose as long as his Minister if he has as much respect for truth and integrity as his Minister.

**Mr. Fisher:** You don't think he has the right to change his own budget?

**Mr. Andre:** I do not think any Minister of the Crown has the right to flim-flam the Canadian public, to leak budgets, to