

*The Budget—Mr. Kuhl*

Mr. HOMUTH: Give him an extra thirty minutes and he will be in deep water.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Golding): The hon. member's time has expired.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Go ahead.

Mr. KNOWLES: No; I am not asking for any more time, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to rest my case with the answers I have made to the questions of the Minister of Finance. This budget, in its total context, is a disappointment.

Mr. W. F. KUHL (Jasper-Edson): I realize that we are still in an emergency period and I realize as well as any member of the house that so long as that emergency exists we cannot expect the standard of living that we should otherwise expect. We cannot expect it so long as there are multitudes of starving people in the world, so long as there are many without the essentials of life. It would be inhumanitarian of us to expect a high standard of living for ourselves before we have at least made our contribution toward raising the living standard of those people. Despite that fact, now is the time that we ought to be laying down long-range objectives for the time when the emergency is over, and that is my greatest concern. That is why I wish to choose, as the cue for my remarks, the concluding words of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley), which were also quoted by the hon. member who preceded me. Personally, I consider those particular remarks of the Minister of Finance just about the most important in his whole budget speech. I do not know that it is necessary for me to quote the whole thing. I will read one paragraph in which he says:

We Canadians can achieve great objectives if we can agree among ourselves upon those objectives and devote our energies to reaching them. That is clearly shown by what happened in the war. Now that the war is over, we have an opportunity to select and to achieve objectives just as challenging, just as exciting as those of war, but of a constructive and progressive nature. I believe that the Canadian people, if properly informed, are prepared to agree, by and large, upon great peace-time objectives and to devote to their attainment something of the same spirit and energy which made our war achievements possible. It is the duty of all of us in government, in business, in labour, in agriculture, to do all that we can now to make possible that agreement upon ends and upon means which will enable Canada in peace to be worthy of the record of Canadians at war.

I think that is an important statement, and I shall confine my remarks on this occasion to a consideration of objectives toward which we should strive once we are through the emergency period, as well as the means whereby we may attempt to attain those objectives.

[Mr. Knowles.]

We heard a great deal a few years ago, as we came to the conclusion of the war, about the new order, a new heaven and a new earth. The only comment I care to make in that respect is that if this budget or the nature of it is to be a sample of the new order, I would characterize it not as a heaven on earth but as a hell on earth. In considering objectives and means of attaining them for the future, I should like to pose a few questions. If we are to have this much-vaunted new earth, this new order, does it mean necessarily that we must throw overboard the whole of the old order, or is it possible that there are things that we ought to preserve from the old order?

Perhaps there are things that we should eliminate from the old order, and perhaps there are things we should add to make the order work as nearly close to perfection as any human institutions can be made to work. I will attempt to answer these questions. What is it that we wish to preserve of the old system? I realize, immediately I make such a remark, that I shall come into conflict with my hon. friends to the right, in the C.C.F. party, but I wish to assure them that anything I may say by way of criticism of them is not intended to be personal. I consider they are fine fellows personally, likable fellows, but unfortunately I must take decided issue with the policies they support. Therefore in discussing the question as to what we should preserve of the old system, I wish them to understand that it is with the policies they advocate that I am taking issue. It is far beyond a personal matter.

During the course of this debate so far almost every member of the C.C.F. party who has spoken, including the hon. gentleman who preceded me, has stated that private enterprise as such is through. I wish to take emphatic issue with that statement and to assert that private enterprise as a principle is as sound as the rock of Gibraltar. The reason, as I have said on many previous occasions, that hon. members of the C.C.F., as well as communists, condemn private enterprise is that they hold it responsible for things for which it should not be held responsible. I say the C.C.F., and all those who condemn private enterprise, are charging it falsely.

What do they say? One of the first things they say is that private enterprise has failed because it does not and has not provided employment. How many times have we heard that stated, in parliament and out of it? We hear the statement made that private enterprise has failed, because it does not provide employment. I say that is a false charge, because private enterprise is not responsible