

The Budget—Mr. C. Cameron

I have often heard it said that members of this group are forever crying blue ruin, and there has been the suggestion sometimes that we would welcome another depression. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that anyone who has himself endured the heart-sickening experience of being unable to supply his children's needs is not likely to wish to see another depression; and if some of us in this chamber suggest that there are dangers on the horizon it is because we see ominous signs and speak from bitter experience.

I would suggest, sir, that we should pay attention to what the economic experts of the central bank have been telling us in the last week. A dangerous inflationary situation exists which, if unchecked, will inevitably lead to another depression. The workers of Canada need to have it driven home to them that they are in a very precarious position no matter how seemingly prosperous they may be at the present time, and that unless this expansion can be stretched out so as to become virtually permanent and stable, then they will be trading a fictitious prosperity of today for a very definite misery of tomorrow.

I think, sir, and I do not think it is too harsh to say so, that this budget has been cruel and heartless to many of the people of Canada who deserve better at the hands of the government. In addition, it has been frivolously reckless in failing altogether to make any provision to control the inflationary pressures in our economy. I challenge the Minister of Finance to point to one spot in his budget which can be classified as a control over the situation pointed up by the governor of the Bank of Canada. The minister has disregarded the advice of these economic advisers and I suggest, sir, that the only reason he has disregarded it is that those who are interested in the re-election of the Liberal party were determined that their interests would not be subjected to the economic necessities of today.

The government yielded to those pressures. They yielded to the pressures from those who provide the sinews of war, some of the 23 per cent of Canadian income receivers who are the active force in the ownership of Canadian industry. Because of rational and sensible policy of inflation control would have worked an immediate hardship on such people, no such steps were taken. I think, sir, that while the government will in all probability again persuade the people of Canada to send them back to office, the time is not far off when members of the Liberal party are going to have to make up their minds. They are going to have to decide whether they are going to move over into the mists of antiquity with our friends in the official opposition, or whether they are going to move into the

[Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo).]

twentieth and twenty-first centuries by means of a reorganization of our economy.

I suggest to you, sir, that within the next three or four years members of the Liberal party supporting the government will have to decide on which side of the fence they are going to stay. It may very well be that this budget, which with all deference to the minister I would describe as essentially a stupid budget, will be the watershed from which the Liberal party will divide. That there is going to be a realignment of political forces in this country no political observer, of course, can escape knowing. The Minister of Finance has shown us by his budget on which side of the watershed, which side of the fence, he lives, because he has prepared a budget to protect the interests of the well to do in Canada and to give contemptuous negligence to the welfare of the ordinary common or garden Canadian citizen.

So, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down I wish to move as a subamendment to the amendment of the official opposition, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre:

That the amendment be amended by changing the semicolon at the end of subparagraph (a) thereof to a comma, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words:

"by increasing the old age pension to an amount commensurate with the increase in the gross national product since 1949, which would call for a pension of approximately \$75 a month."

Mr. Victor Quelch (Acadia): Mr. Speaker, I should imagine that all ministers of finance must get quite a thrill when they deliver their budget speeches amidst the thunderous applause of their party. On the other hand, I always feel that they must experience somewhat of a let-down when everybody in the country starts to pick holes in it and even some of the members who were so enthusiastic at the time the budget was delivered seem to lack some of that enthusiasm in the days that follow.

My main criticism of the minister's budget proposals is that while the minister expressed some concern over the rising costs of living, his proposals do very little either to reduce those costs or to relieve the burden they place upon the people in the lower income brackets. Later in my remarks I will have some specific proposals to make in regard to that question.

First of all I want to turn to the minister's comments on the present economic situation in Canada. The minister emphasized the strength of the Canadian economy, and I want to turn to page 2214 of *Hansard* of March 14. After pointing out that the gross physical output was about 7 per cent higher than in 1955 he had this to say:

This 7 per cent increase in real terms is about double the average annual increase which we