

of Ontario yesterday brought down budgets, and given the fact that the treasurer of the province of Ontario has been asking the government of Canada to prove its sincerity in the discussions at the first ministers' meeting, will the minister explain to the House of Commons why he is not acting now on the agreement of the first ministers' conference and why, in light of the dollar situation that gets worse every day, he continues to add to the uncertainty of our economic policy by refusing to bring in a budget? Will he tell us when he intends to bring in a budget for the people of Canada.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member would not want me to present the same type of budget that was presented yesterday, when the Ontario government increased taxes. The Leader of the Opposition is asking us to cut taxes. I think some notes should be compared in that party.

On the question of the Canadian dollar, I was very pleased yesterday to hear the man who shows a lot of responsibility as treasurer of the government of Ontario say that he likes the Canadian dollar as it is. I can see that the view of the Ontario administration, vis-à-vis the Canadian dollar which makes Canadian goods more competitive, is acceptable to Ontario. But, of course, it is not acceptable to the official opposition.

#### CALL FOR INTRODUCTION OF BUDGET

**Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The sadness for Canada is that we have a federal Minister of Finance who continues to refuse to accept his responsibility to provide some economic leadership to the country. The ministers of finance of other jurisdictions are prepared to act on the agreements of the first ministers' conference. This minister continues to play games and evade bringing in a budget.

Will the minister now confirm to the House of Commons that he has let it be known to private groups with whom he has been meeting that the question of when a budget will be brought before the House of Commons of Canada is now out of his hands and has been turned over to the Prime Minister and his political advisers; and that that decision will be taken on the basis of the political interests of the Liberal party and not the economic requirements of this country?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, about five weeks after I became Minister of Finance, I brought into this House what I call an economic statement; some call it a mini-budget and others call it a budget. It took me less than five weeks to change the economic policies of the government. In that statement I provided a stimulative stance for the Canadian economy in 1978 to the tune of \$3 billion. That started on January 1, 1978.

I think it is only common sense that I should wait to see what the effect will be before I bring down a budget. I said that there will be a budget. There will not be a budget, however, until I have had time to assess the stimulative stance I took in my economic statement of October 28. I will not write a budget because the hon. member wants me to bring

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down a budget; I will have a budget when it is time to have one.

● (1422)

#### VALUE OF CANADIAN DOLLAR—BORROWING TO SUPPORT RATE OF EXCHANGE

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, my follow-up question to the Minister of Finance relates to the \$200 million he indicated the government intends to take down, or has taken down in respect of our \$1.5 billion line of credit with Canadian chartered banks. Will he indicate if the government have taken down any further funds, or have they made any initial preparations to take down further funds in respect of this credit, in order to support our dollar?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I said at the time I made the announcement about the first \$200 million that if there were to be further drawings from that facility in the marketplace, it would be indicated at the time we publish the reserve figures at the beginning of next month.

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact the government has acknowledged that a falling dollar triggers inflation, is the minister aware that in the three months ending January, Canada had the highest three-month annualized inflation rate of any of our major trading partners: higher than the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan and Germany? If he is aware of that, will he indicate whether the government is totally indifferent to the decline in the dollar and, in fact, is saying a lower dollar is good—inflation be damned?

[Translation]

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, when the figures on inflation were published early last month, we say that the inflation rate had dropped from 9.5 to 9 per cent. We are still confident that we shall fulfill our objectives, namely a rate of inflation of about 6 per cent by the end of 1978.

[English]

#### STATUS OF WOMEN

##### GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME FOR SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the status of women. In view of the fact that 200,000 women in Canada are single parents, one-third of whom are living at or below the poverty level, and in view of the fact that the Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommended eight years ago that the federal government institute a guaranteed annual income for single-parent families with dependent children, will the minister tell us when such a program will finally be implemented?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Mr. Speaker, the proposal of the government is to institute an income supplementation program that would