

The Budget—Mrs. Mitchell

hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen)—Human Rights—Reported plan to establish civilian internment camps. (b) Terms of Standing Order published in *The Canada Gazette*; the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster)—The Environment—Increased grants for construction of municipal sewage treatment systems.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the amendment of Mr. Wilson (p. 12752).

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party and as its housing critic, I join with most Canadians in expressing my deep concern that the Liberal budget has denied the realities of the economic crisis in Canada, has refused to take positive steps, particularly in the area of interest rates and unemployment, and is totally insensitive to the very serious social consequences for workers, for children, for the elderly, for average families and, particularly, for poor Canadians.

Before addressing the question of housing, I want to speak first on behalf of Canada's children. I should like the record of the House to show that the budget deliberately ignored the recommendations of the Commission on the International Year of the Child and of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs which concerned the urgent needs of Canada's children. These recommendations submitted to the House last spring urged immediate federal action and federal leadership to deal with poverty as it affects young children and their families. The Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) completely ignored this very important and urgent report. Because of this budget omission, millions of Canadian children will continue to be deprived of adequate nutrition, decent shelter and necessary child care. Many are being damaged and abused because their parents simply cannot cope with the continuous stress, insecurity and unemployment which the budget predicts will continue. The plight of native children is a national disgrace. The government continues to ignore situations which would be intolerable even in Third World countries.

The minister said that the budget was concerned with equity. If the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) were here, I think he would say that this is another "MacEachenism", a half-truth. I ask the Minister of Finance whether this neglect of Canada's children is equitable, moral, or even financially feasible? The budget should have contained major reforms to the child tax credit system as a first step

toward an adequate guaranteed income. The \$3 increase per month in favour of lower-income families, which the minister said is a reform of the child tax credit system, will not even cover the cost of babies' diapers.

Low-income men and women who stay at home to perform parenting roles with young children, especially many single parents, suffer considerable loss of necessary income. We believe they should receive higher tax credits and Canada pension coverage. Also the budget should allow expanded income tax deductions for the cost of daycare for working parents. Federal assistance should be expanded greatly to make good quality daycare services available in every community across the country. Surely this would have been a wise investment in Canada's future generation. Are human resources less important than gas and oil and national defence? We will pay the social cost of this negligence. It will cost far more than prevention would have cost had it been included in the budget.

As the NDP housing critic I want to concentrate on the budget as it affects Canada's serious housing crisis. In preparation for a study of the document, I listed several questions related to housing concerns in Canada. Let us take a look at the answers which are now apparent. First, would there be relief for home owners facing mortgage renewals? We know now that the government offered merely a crumb, and a pretty crummy crumb it is.

Second, would there be help for renters? There was nothing in the budget for renters—no shelter allowances or increases in non-profit housing, which is about the only affordable type of rental shelter.

Third, would the budget stimulate rental construction? We know that MURBs are out now, thank goodness, and that the government offered no-interest loans of \$7,500 for some 15,000 rental units over the next two years.

Fourth, would there be increases in RRAP funds for renovations and home repairs? No, there was none.

Fifth, would the government help victims of urea formaldehyde foam insulation? This is a government obligation since a government-sponsored program encouraged the use of this poisonous type of foam. There was no help for UFFI victims.

Sixth, would the CMHC budget be increased, even increased to the amount allocated in 1976? No. It was not.

Seventh, would there be a lowering of interest rates, particularly mortgage interest rates, the major cause of the housing disaster? Of course not.

Eighth, what about no excess profits tax on banks and increases in capital gains tax? Of course there were no taxes on bank profits and capital gains tax remains the same.

Ninth, would there be a reinstatement of the community grants program for land banking which is also urgently needed for affordable housing? This is something about which municipalities were particularly concerned over the past year. No, again. All we have is a token amount in the budget for rental