

responsibilities. May I now call on the hon. member for Peace River.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), I would like to add that if we consider as a matter of no importance the interest rate which will be charged to municipalities and provinces, it is sufficient to refer to the item of the budget to find out that it is hardly irrelevant because the interest rate—

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member is making a speech and not raising a point of order. I ask the House to co-operate with the Chair and proceed in the regular fashion. There will be opportunities to ask these questions of the Minister of Finance in due course. I now recognize the hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Baldwin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think your decision is very reasonable.

Mr. Fortin: Will you ask the question?

Mr. Baldwin: It has been suggested to me that I can relay the question to the Minister of Finance, if he did not hear it. At this point I would ask the Minister of Finance if, in the course of this debate, he would indicate not only to my hon. friends in the Social Credit party, but to all members of the House, what the interest rate will be?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Baldwin: No, I was asking the Minister of Finance a question. I asked him a question, and I hope that by the time I have completed my remarks he will have the information with which to answer. If not, he can take two days more to come up with the answer.

Mr. Drury: You haven't read the bill yet.

Mr. Baldwin: What bill? Mr. Speaker, this brings me to a very interesting point. That was a Freudian slip on the part of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). We are not dealing with a bill. This is one of the complaints I am going to make about the way we are dealing with this issue.

I was just getting to the very interesting stage in my remarks where I was complaining about the attitude of the Minister of Finance who, as the first law officer—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Former.

Mr. Baldwin:—who at one time was the first law officer and constitutional adviser to the cabinet. I was complaining about the very light way in which he now accepts his responsibility as a member of the Treasury Board when he advocates that we disregard the laws of this country. He cites improprieties in the past. He goes back to improprieties that were committed in a number of instances. Mr. Speaker, I don't care which party is in power, I take the position that there is a right way and a wrong way to proceed when we come to take tax money from the people of this country. No matter what was done in the past, the

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Minister of Finance would be well advised in this period in his career, which may very well shortly be curtailed—

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): You were a parliamentary secretary to the then Prime Minister when all those things went through in 1959 and 1960.

Mr. Baldwin: In the very limited time left to him to hold his office, he would be well advised to comply with the law. I would suggest to him that he should remember the phrase, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive."

An hon. Member: That is what he gets for following your practice.

Mr. Baldwin: This government has done this. If this were the first instance, I would take no account of it. A certain amount of ignorance goes hand in hand with the operations of the Minister of Finance and all hon. members opposite. But now it has become more than ignorance. It has become a stated method of proceeding. We have the case which the hon. member for Yukon so well illustrated.

We have some lawyers in this chamber. Some of us were lawyers before we progressed to become members of parliament and went upwards in the scale of society. But there is a very interesting proposition *scienter*, that every dog is entitled to one bite. However, having made that bite, he ought to be destroyed if he bites a second time.

Let me chronicle a few of the things that the government has done in this respect. We had the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, and the Unemployment Insurance Fund, where we caught them out cold with their hands in the taxpayers' pockets, without licence to do so. Then, we had the case of the CNR which engaged an auditor for a year without any legal obligation to pay him. Then, we had the Export Development Corporation, and one of my colleagues who participated in that debate convinced the House that the government had exceeded its commitment under a legal ceiling at that time. I could go on, Mr. Speaker. This dog has been biting so often that it is about time it was put back in its kennel. A dog catcher will get him in the next election.

My hon. friend from the Yukon has well made his case with respect to illegality. I don't need to enlarge on that, but I want to deal with this issue in other areas of substance. I was shocked to see the Minister of Finance stand in his place today and, in his most pitiful and inadequate way, attempt to defend the program outlined in this estimate, saying, "Last June I went around the country. I went to the provinces and found out that measures of this kind were required." What a shocking admission that is. That was in June of last year. Obviously, the House was still sitting. We were attempting to drum the facts of life into the government. We were attempting to show the government what the situation would be in the fall and this winter. My hon. friends in the NDP were associated with us in our endeavours at that time. But in the face of all that, in face of these trips that the minister had taken in June, in face of the fact that he had come to the conclusion that measures of this kind were required, what happened? Nothing was done. The House recessed at the