

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—REQUEST FOR NEW BUDGET TO IMPROVE CANADIAN ECONOMY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Broadbent:

That this House urges the government to introduce, within two weeks, a new budget, for the purpose of dealing with the increasingly dangerous state of the Canadian economy, and specifically to cope with mounting unemployment, the housing needs of our people, and the scourge of poverty.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): I recognize the hon. member for Mississauga (Mr. Abbott).

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not think our friend in the Creditiste party had finished what he wanted to say. Perhaps the House would give him a few minutes in order that he may complete his remarks.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: It seems to me I did not have much time available. I would have had many other things to say but I have been told that my time was over and I no longer have my notes.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): The minister says you may continue.

Mr. Laprise: I no longer have my notes, Madam Speaker.

[English]

Mr. A. C. Abbott (Mississauga): Madam Speaker, I think my notes have left too. However, I am pleased to be able to refer to notes of remarks made by my friend and colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), because I think they contain very largely they kind of answers we need to the problems this country faces, in spite of some comments to the contrary.

Mr. Stevens: What notes are those?

Mr. Abbott: Having regard to the motion proposed by the leader of the NDP, while I think the spirit in which he introduced it, with his manifest concern for the unfortunate in the country, was obviously sincere, I was disappointed that apart from venting his spleen he did not propose any formula that might be used to improve the financial conditions of the country.

An hon. Member: That is normal and has been the case since 1968.

Mr. Abbott: Right. He simply stood there and shouted in a loud voice that there were people suffering in poverty and the Minister of Finance had failed abjectly to meet the problems of this country. There was no suggestion whatever as to how he or his colleagues would deal with the situation. Their dwindling numbers in this House would give credence to the belief that the Canadian people got their message and found it wanting.

Canadian Economy

As to the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), he did make a few more substantive comments, but I would share the view of the Minister of Finance that by the cunning method of extracting quotations he attempted to persuade the House and the country that the cabinet is deeply divided and the Minister of Finance is engaged in a losing struggle with his colleagues.

Mr. Stevens: They were the minister's own words.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Show me those words.

Mr. Abbott: I suggest that is almost as much wishful thinking as was his final cry, that the only solution was for the government to resign.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Abbott: I assure the hon. member that his cry was heard throughout the country last year, and a suitable response was given us on July 8.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: I am only surprised that the hon. member for York-Simcoe got back.

Mr. Abbott: That was an unpleasant surprise, but you can't win them all. I made reference to the comments of the Minister of Finance today and I should like to refer briefly to some words he delivered in a speech in Toronto not very long ago. These are brought to mind by the evident attitude of hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for York-Simcoe, which would seem to suggest or imply that Canada is an impoverished island in a sea of prosperity, with the rest of the world suffering none of the problems this country has. In fact, the opposite is true. The hon. member indicated that the unemployment rate in this country is 6.8 per cent, but he did not tell the House that the United States rate of unemployment is 8.5 per cent; that the unemployment rate in the state of Michigan is over 20 per cent and in Detroit it is 45 per cent. He does not tell us about those rates. Perhaps he does not know about them, or if he knows about them he is not prepared to tell us.

Mr. Stevens: What about Germany? Give us a few of the European unemployment rates.

Mr. Abbott: The minister, in his speech in Toronto, said:

The fact is, however, that the world is confronted by a series of complex and difficult problems without precedent in our history. Governments of many countries have joined together in an intensive effort to devise ways and means of overcoming the difficulties confronting them. But there are no easy answers and no instant solutions. Cosmetic politics should not be confused with effective leadership, nor should action just for the sake of "doing something". We shouldn't forget that in the uncertain situation facing us there is always the danger of doing the wrong thing, making our problems just that much worse. There are, for example, those today who seems to feel that this is a time for sacrifice and for donning sackcloth and ashes in pursuit of that old-time religion, as it has been referred to south of the border. That was the approach adopted by many governments but not in this country.

I suggest the Minister of Finance has disclosed to the House the extraordinarily serious difficulties faced by this country, both in his budget of November 18 and subsequently today. He has never failed to disclose frankly the