

The Budget—Mr. Dupras

Naturally, there are other causes for the fluctuations of the dollar, if one considers, for example, the performance of the tourist industry in Canada, with a deficit of almost \$2 billion in 1977, and this could double in a few years if drastic measures are not taken. Mr. Speaker, we should be very happy with the provisions contained in the budget which will indeed help promote the tourist industry.

This leads me to consider the provision contained in the Quebec provincial budget which removes the 8 per cent tax on hotel rooms. The budget brought down by the Minister of Finance aimed at stimulating the economy and creating jobs. The removal of the 8 per cent tax on hotel rooms will only attain those aims in a few years. Allow me to explain, Mr. Speaker. The tourist industry has suffered, especially in Montreal and in Quebec City, from the lack of major conventions. As we all know, conventions are prepared years in advance so that the people who will be holding conventions in 1980 and 1981 have already signed agreements and made reservations either in North America or in Europe. So this tax cut is only window-dressing, because if you look at the facts, it is very impressive, as it will not really prompt Canadians to visit the province of Quebec unless other corrective action is taken and other measures adopted.

There are two other things, Mr. Speaker, which I could say about the Quebec budget, since they are trying by that new scheme to undermine the strong conviction held by the Canadian people that the Canadian confederation is really working well for all Canadians throughout the country. More than ever in Quebec, the people have such a conviction, as I realized Wednesday last, Mr. Speaker, at my nomination meeting. My fellow citizens, my constituents, are looking to the Canadian government which they consider as their own, with which they can hold a dialogue, a government that listens to its electors and the people of the province.

One only has to consider, for example, the treatment given to the Quebec Council of municipalities at its last convention, where all kinds of tactics were used to keep the Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) away, because he had indeed developed a credibility with the civic authorities who found out that this federal minister listened to their grievances and tried by every possible means to help them disprove the arguments put forward by the Quebec premier.

● (1442)

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment briefly on the decision of a distinguished member of the opposition not to seek re-election. It is no wonder that the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) has decided not to run again.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Why don't you make your choice for Canada and quit too?

Mr. Dupras: I would make the same decision if I were a member of that party. The hon. member for Don Valley can count on my admiration.

Mr. McKinnon: Like John Turner and Donald Macdonald.

[Mr. Dupras.]

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Macdonald and Basford are doing the same thing.

An hon. Member: And Mitchell Sharp.

Mr. Dupras: I know it has not been easy for the hon. member for Don Valley. I know he has had difficulty convincing his colleagues about a few economic matters.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Why don't you partake in public service and quit?

Mr. Dupras: That is wishful thinking. I know the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) would like me to quit, but I was re-nominated.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): You are good for comic relief.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Dupras: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to end my remarks by saying that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) needs help. I know he is seeking help from his provincial colleagues. He has consulted them and tried to learn their views on the budget.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition really needs help, and it is not his lack of understanding of the special problems in Quebec nor his support of a separatist budget which will earn him votes in Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in this debate this afternoon. While training for my profession I was counselled not to depend upon the size of a listening audience but to make my presentation as though the whole world were listening. Today I have the opportunity to speak in this debate. I am not sure how many people will listen to me, but there are certain things I would like to say anyway.

Back in October, 1977, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) bootlegged a mini-budget into the throne speech debate, the response of this party was that the minister was only tinkering with the system to avoid a full-fledged budget debate. In fact the minister declined to call his mini-budget a budget. He called it an economic statement. Nevertheless, there were some similarities, and perhaps the mini-budget of last October was more like a real budget than the one we are discussing today.

We on this side felt that the minister's response last October to the economic realities of the country was completely inadequate. Since last October whenever we on this side of the House have called for firm and decisive action, the minister's response has been to say that we have to wait until we see the results of the measures introduced last October. We have been told we have to wait until the results of those measures trickle down and it becomes obvious as to the extent to which the