

Government helps everybody but Canadians

By Sinclair Stevens
MP York-Simcoe

It looks like Canada is heading for still higher unemployment and higher inflation, with less prosperity.

The federal budget, introduced last week, makes this clear. The falling dollar, off a further half cent since the budget was presented, confirms this point.

UNEMPLOYMENT: The budget makes no prediction of the unemployment rate, or even of job creation during the year. Most budgets do set out the estimates but Finance Minister Jean Chretien obviously felt bad news was better to ignore than to highlight.

In the economic statement of October, 1977, the Minister of Finance stated that "sustained growth of between 5 and 6 per cent" was necessary "in order to bring unemployment steadily down." At that time, he was predicting 5 per cent real economic growth in 1978. In other words, Mr. Chretien foresaw no improvement in unemployment. In the budget of April 10, 1978, Mr. Chretien is predicting less than 5 per cent real growth. His own statements and forecasts add up to a rise in unemployment this year.

INFLATION: As wage and price controls are phased out, the Trudeau government has begun to abandon its inflation targets at a record rate.

When the controls programme was imposed in October, 1975, former Finance Minister Macdonald forecast that the inflation rate would fall to four per cent by October, 1978. This target was abandoned in October, 1977, when Finance Minister Chretien said that the inflation rate would average six per cent in 1978. That target was abandoned in early 1978, when both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister said inflation might reach six per cent by the end of the year.

The April 10 budget offers yet another forecast of inflation, higher than any of the previous forecasts. According to Finance Minister Chretien's latest forecast for 1978, "the increase in the consumer price index is likely to be about 7 per cent". How long this forecast will last is not clear; most private sector forecasters expect somewhat higher inflation in 1978.

For many Canadians, 7 per cent inflation means a lower standard of living. With wage increases limited to 6 per cent by wage controls, prices will rise faster than wages. Finance Minister Chretien does

not care if living standards fall. He has stated publicly: "if that means we are poorer, it is too bad".

ECONOMIC GROWTH: Canada has not achieved its potential for economic growth since and including 1974. On April 10, Finance Minister Chretien conceded that economic growth potential will not be achieved in 1978. Canada will have failed to achieve its growth potential for five straight years.

In October 1977, Chretien assured Canadians that his policies would achieve 5 per cent real economic growth in 1978. He maintained consistently that no further stimulus was required. Less than six months later, Chretien has been forced to bring in new stimulus to the economy and has been forced to reduce his estimate of real economic growth to less than five per cent. He says he has "shaded down" his forecast.

THE DEFICIT: The financial accounts of the government of Canada have been out of control for some time. However, they are so far gone in the current year that the administration is quite incapable of predicting where they will end up next.

In his budget of March 31, 1977, former Finance Minister Macdonald stated that the budgetary deficit would be \$7.2 billion in fiscal 1978 — \$305 for every man, woman and child in Canada. Someone made a \$3.1 billion error. The 1978 accounts now show a budgetary deficit of \$10.3 billion — \$436 for each person in Canada. Truly mammoth financial mismanagement lead to a 43 per cent error in forecasting the deficit. That error alone has left every Canadian with an unexpected \$131 in additional public debt.

In this environment, Mr. Chretien has predicted a \$10.9 billion budgetary deficit for fiscal 1979 — \$462 for every Canadian. In fiscal 1968, total federal budgetary spending was \$488 per Canadian. In other words, the federal government now overspends per Canadian almost as much as they spent per Canadian in 1968. That means that amount of extra debt will have to be repaid plus interest for years to come. Of course, there is no guarantee that the deficit forecast will be accurate. If there is another 43 per cent error in forecasting the deficit, it will reach \$15.6 billion — \$661 per Canadian, or about \$1,600 for each Canadian family.

Police reports

Used lighter as flashlight torched bed

Police said a fire at the Fraser home, 200 Stouffer Street, Stouffville, at 3 p.m. Saturday afternoon, April 22, was caused when a 13-year-old boy ignited a lighter while searching for some tape under his bed.

Bed sheets and a mattress caught fire and a bedroom wall was damaged. The Stouffville Fire Department attended and the estimated total loss was \$4,000.

Home break-in

A 15-year-old juvenile has been charged with breaking into the home of Helen Bambrick, 7th Concession, in the Stouffville area April 8, and removing jewellery.

On Friday, April 21 at 2:45 p.m. police apprehended the suspect and after processing at 19 Division turned him over to his parents for court May 3.

Rifle threat

A Victoria Square man was charged with having a weapon dangerous to the public

peace, and threatening, after police were called during a domestic dispute at 8:15 p.m., April 19.

According to a police report Margaret Tyndall was threatened with a .32 calibre rifle in a dispute with her husband.

Norman Stanley Tyndall, 50, Lot 24, Conc. 4, R.R. 2, Gormley, was arrested at 9:30 p.m. and held for a show cause April 20.

Fraud charge

A Toronto man has been charged with fraud, after management at Deer Park Inn complained that a customer came to the Inn April 10, consumed \$48.07 of food and beverages and left without paying.

According to a police report the suspect was contacted three times by the complainant and asked to pay up but refused.

Joseph Worne Jemmett, 38, of 1692A Jane Street was arrested April 21 and will appear at court April 25.



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