

Government Orders

I remain unclear of what my view is of these measures. I can support the philosophy of the CAP transfers but I do not know where they are really headed or what the public policy purpose is. In the case of the PUITTA transfers I do not support the philosophy but I do recognize that the government has not introduced additional cuts. Of course we would fight that quite strongly. Those are measures we are going to have to examine in committee.

I see your signal, Mr. Speaker. I believe there will be other speakers on some of the other matters. I say once again there are things in this bill to recommend it. I just regret that we are proceeding with this omnibus approach to legislation which, because it lumps in things we support and things we do not support, unfortunately deprives us of the ability to support the government in votes where that would be appropriate.

• (1305)

I appreciate very much your patience, Mr. Speaker. I believe we will hear later in debate from the hon. member for Lethbridge, who was unable to be here today, as well as other members of our party.

The Deputy Speaker: There are no questions or comments for the first three speakers on these matters, so the hon. member will have a chance with another speaker.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I noted the hon. member for Calgary West who just spoke was bemoaning his lack of opportunity to vote against segments of this bill, but I assure him that he will have that opportunity in committee and if he moves the appropriate amendments at report stage, as I indicated in my argument this morning. We will see how many of the clauses of this bill he supports and in fact would vote for.

I look forward to the support of the Reform Party for a large part of this package because this package of proposals I submit is a sound one.

Last month this government introduced its first budget and today we are considering legislation that will help turn the budget goals into a bottom line reality for the long term benefit of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Just a week ago, the Minister of Finance and a few other ministers attended in Detroit the G-7 special Summit on unemployment. The G-7 members confirmed the view held by many that February's budget was exactly what Canada needed at this stage of its economic development. This budget promises no panacea. Instead, it restores confidence in our capacity to cope successfully with the economic, financial and social challenges we are facing.

We will succeed because our budget proposes innovative measures taking effect immediately to deal with three major concerns raised by Canadians in our pre-budget consultations. It contains measures to ensure job creation and stimulate economic growth. It reduces expenditures and brings them under control to enable us to substantially lower the deficit. Finally, the budget is laying the groundwork of an unprecedented reform and renewal of our social security system.

Each of these points is dealt with in one way or another in this bill before us in second reading. Together, these measures will help set the strong foundation on which the future of our country will be built.

[*English*]

I congratulate the Minister of Finance on the leadership that he has shown to Canadians in presenting this budget of which this bill is the obvious manifestation in legislative form. I congratulate him also on the consultation process that he engaged in that has resulted in a budget that is acceptable to so many Canadians.

Before describing the specific measures in this legislation we should remember the broader budget context that the measures reflect. In the lead-up to the February budget the Minister of Finance and his colleagues, as I indicated, listened to what Canadians told them.

Canadians wanted a government to set the stage for job creation and this government has done that. Canadians wanted action to restore our country's economic vitality. This budget does that.

The government responded with such important measures as the \$6 billion shared cost infrastructure program, the restoration of the residential rehabilitation program, new programs for apprenticeship and youth service and support for technological innovation and for the small business sector in particular.

Canadians also told the government that they wanted to have the deficit reduced. They wanted to have the government stop pushing the tax burden constantly higher.

The February budget makes fiscal responsibility part of a job strategy for Canadians. At the same time it recognizes that getting the deficit down is important. It also means that getting economic growth up is very important. Increasing economic growth will result in a decreased deficit and increased economic growth will lead to greater employment for Canadians.

• (1310)

That is why this legislation contains key measures that will reduce the demands on the public purse and accordingly on the taxpayers' wallet. These are measures affecting Parliament, the public service, the private sector and Canadians in all regions of the country.