

Government Orders

I would like to think this is only a first step, albeit a small step, in a process of the government balancing a budget. Canadians expect that. The Reform Party, in listening to what constituents are telling us, has come up with a vision which seems to be lacking from the government. It is a vision that looks at balancing the budget in the near future, not in 10 years when it is too late.

It is very important that we balance the budget as soon as possible. Only then can the government start eliminating an interest payment, or at least reducing an interest payment, and start eliminating the debt that has accumulated to over \$550 billion. Our children and grandchildren can expect nothing less from all of us but to look at that very real problem, the problem that in three years time, if the government continues with its plan, we will be paying \$50 billion in interest payments.

At least the Reform Party has acknowledged the problem, has identified the solution to the problem is short term pain for long term gain. In its taxpayers budget, the Reform Party has been up front, honest and has shown the Canadian public what is necessary for the country to get its financial house in order. The Reform Party has shown vision when it has talked about other ways for people to look after their own interests, to look after their own economic needs.

We have been visionary in looking at what is wrong with the system as it stands today and where we can go with it. When we talk to Canadians about the potential of an RPSP, a personal plan where they invest in their own future to look after their own needs, it is something Canadians can understand and they look for.

I do not know how many constituents I have talked to have contributed to the unemployment insurance plan and find that after 30 years of working it is not there for them when they need it. I do not know how many Canadians I have talked to in my constituency have contributed money to the civil servant pension plan or the RCMP pension plan or the defence pension plan, the armed forces pension plan. They think that money is sitting there in a pension plan, that it is protected. In reality that money is in the big black hole and is part of our national debt.

There is no security in there for any of these people who are looking at the Canadian pension plan or the individual pension plan. That concerns them. They look at this visionary RPSP where they are contributing to a plan that is there for them when they need it. They decide how much they will take out to assist them when there is unemployment or any other situation. They look at that as a new way, an interesting way, an interesting concept and something they can really get into.

I look forward to the days and months to come of expanding on that idea and sharing with Canadians how that can work for

them. Canadians are looking to their government to have that kind of vision, for their government to be able to look for new ideas, not always falling back on the old way of doing things.

The old way of doing things which the Liberals brought in many years ago, 30-odd years ago, in deficit budgeting followed by the Mulroney Conservatives, has put us in this position. It is incumbent on the government to start taking the lead from the Reform Party with a newer vision and to start looking for some real answers instead of doing things the stale old way that only gets us deeper and deeper into debt.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Bélisle (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, in speaking to Bill C-76, I would like to draw the attention of this House to what is really at stake in the budget tabled last February 27 by the Minister of Finance. This bill is supposed to be an act to implement certain provisions of the budget, according to the wording in the bill.

• (1805)

These provisions will change the financial and social framework of this country, independently of any constitutional or administrative agreement with the provinces.

The creation of the new Canada social transfer to replace the Canada assistance plan and the program to fund established programs will completely change the division of financial resources between Ottawa and the provinces in the future.

Through this Canada social transfer, the federal government will reduce drastically its contributions to the funding of health and social programs. Clause 48 of part V of the bill mentions, and I quote: "Subject to this part —for the purposes of (a) establishing interim arrangements to finance social programs in a manner that will increase provincial flexibility; (b) maintaining the national criteria and conditions in the *Canada Health Act*".

Despite the talk of greater flexibility for the provinces, the federal government is going to reduce its financial contribution substantially and the provinces will have to implement all aspects of the Canada Health Act, including the key components of public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, accessibility, extra billing and user charges. How can the provinces be flexible when they must comply with all provisions of the Canada Health Act while Ottawa is reducing its financial contribution to health care and social programs in general?

Given the current overtaxation of the middle class, which, it must be said, remains the real cash cow of all levels of government, and the chronic indebtedness of the federal and provincial governments, the provinces will have no room left to manoeuvre. Although the federal government is withdrawing from financing, it will continue to make the rules.