

Government Orders

the people who receive the money know for sure and they are not willing to say.

Surely it makes sense to do a comprehensive audit to find out if all these moneys are being spent wisely. The government lacks the will to do so. It is a sacred cow and it will hang on to it.

If we look closely at the budget we find it simply does not do the job. We cannot afford to stroll toward a zero deficit target. The time for serious action is running out. It may be this year.

• (1215)

In conclusion, I urge the government to take a serious look at spending just in my little area alone on official languages in an effort to get on with the job of deficit elimination, which Canadians will support.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to participate in the debate on the budget. I am certain 10 minutes will not be enough to cover all the ground I would like to cover. I will outline in point form some of the major concerns I have with it.

I have concerns about the fairness of the budget. I would like to debate at greater length the question of fairness with the member for Haldimand—Norfolk but I will not have the time to do that.

One of the reasons the budget has been received as well as it has is the fact that the government has given the impression there have been no tax increases. In many respects there were not the kind of tax increases that had been flagged prior to the budget. The trick, which is as old as the hills, is to get people worried about a bunch of measures and then when the measures are not included in the budget, people are relieved.

The fact is that Canadians will have to fork over more out of their own pockets in a variety of ways. It may not come through taxes but it will certainly come from having to spend more money on services that were previously provided by the government, whether it is in the form of user fees for national parks, decreased health care availability or whatever the case may be. We ought not to be under any illusion that Canadians got a free lunch out of the budget. Hardly.

I am concerned about a number of things in the budget. First and foremost in my mind and in the minds of my constituents is the privatization of the Canadian National Railway. This is something, given the location of the main repair shops of CNR in Transcona, in the riding of Winnipeg Transcona, that is of obvious concern.

It is a measure of how far to the ideological right this Parliament and the Liberal Party in particular have swung. We see the Liberal Party bringing in a measure to privatize the CNR which is something that previously would not only have been

thought out of character for them but which goes against the promises many Liberal MPs and Liberal candidates made to railroaders in Winnipeg, and to Manitoba as a province, during the election of 1993.

Many people were under the illusion—I was not—in 1993, given some of the things that have been said by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, the Minister of Human Resources Development, that if the Liberals were elected the bleeding of rail jobs away from Winnipeg toward Edmonton and other places would stop and that Winnipeg would be restored as a transportation hub.

The very opposite has happened. The Minister of Transport makes former Tory ministers of transport almost look like friends of railroaders with some of the things that he has said about railroaders and certainly the policies that he seems to be following.

The privatization of CN in the budget is just the final icing on the cake of the things that have been done to rail by the previous Tory government and now by this government. It is a betrayal of Liberal promises and Liberal policy. It shows just how ideologically bent the Liberals are and how, in spite of everything they said in opposition, once they got in government picked up where the Tories left off and accelerated what used to be known as the Mulroney agenda.

With respect to the Canada social transfer and the block funding of all social spending, again it is a total betrayal of the things the Liberal Party has stood for in opposition and previously in government.

• (1220)

Perhaps the Minister of Finance should have waited until May 8 to have given his budget. Then we could have celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the second world war and the end of post-war Canada the same day.

That is basically what the budget did. It declared an end to the kind of society we have been able to build up over the last five decades. It is no coincidence that the end to that era comes at a time when the NDP is severely weakened in Parliament.

The government has no pressure from the left, no criticism from the left, no opposition from the left, at least not the kind it used to have. It gets pushed to the right by my Reform colleagues here. The Bloc Quebecois is preoccupied with its own agenda.

The government and the right wing business Liberals who for so long have had to contend with a left wing contingent in their own party, and with the NDP on their left flank, now are having a heyday. The Minister of Finance is one of those right wing Liberals. He is having his heyday.