

Government Orders

I challenge the Liberal Party and in fact the NDP to indicate just one program of restraint they have supported. I think the member will find that these people opposite cannot do that.

We have cut defence spending, the very thing the member is asking about. If he checks the actual spending estimates for this year he will see there are savings in those estimates. Part of the reason we are able to save is because we are pulling back our obligations in Europe which is a very constructive thing to do. We are also cutting back in some areas so that we can say to all our armed forces personnel that this is their budget, this is how much money they have to spend, and if they want modern equipment, then they will have to show where they can save money in order to spend money.

The member opposite would say to those people that they have been shown where money can be saved but their opportunity to have modern equipment will be cancelled. Our men and women, those who serve you and I and all Canadians, will be forced to work with 40 and 50-year old, ancient equipment which in its own right is not safe.

That is the view of the Liberal Party. That has been the view of the Liberal Party from the day that Pierre Trudeau took over through to today. From 1967 through to 1984 they decimated the equipment that our Armed Forces have. The Liberal Party of today would carry on that decimation until there would be no longer an Armed Forces that could do a darned thing for this country.

Mr. Kilgour: The member seems to forget, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Calgary Northeast and I were expelled from the party. We did not walk away. Our chairs were virtually moved across the Chamber.

Perhaps the member will explain the New Zealand tax system to his colleagues sitting nearby. I suspect I know more about the New Zealand tax system than he does. Will he tell us how the income tax and the sales tax were implemented? Does he think they were done identically in Canada and New Zealand? Has he talked to Roger Douglas about it? I know he was on the committee. I know he came to Edmonton, Mr. Speaker, your city and mine, and would not let a lot of very thoughtful people even speak to the committee.

I know the member's caucus quite well and I do not think there was any intelligent discussion on what the

GST would do to Canada at this time in our economy, what it would do to the small business community, what it would do to the member's constituents. I do not think any of them, or very few of them, understood it from the beginning. They just went along like so many robots following their genius, the former Minister of Finance. With respect, I do not think he understood it at the time nor does he understand it today or the havoc it is wreaking from one end of the country to the other.

• (1820)

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, the member is right, he was expelled and deservedly so. The reason deservedly so is because he did comment about the fact that there was lack of intelligent debate on the matter. As someone who was on the committee for the entire year and a half dealing with this matter, I must admit I do not recall him appearing and providing that intelligent input that he thought was appropriate.

I can comfortably say that the reason we implemented the GST was many fold, but certainly one of them was because we had a regressive sales tax regime in place that penalized the manufacturers in my constituency and other constituencies in Canada. We said that if we got rid of this old federal sales tax we would make our manufacturing sector more competitive. We would be able to assist them, because of that competitiveness, in exporting more product out of Canada.

Is it not interesting that we are now setting records month in and month out. Our exports are record. What are they record in? In manufactured goods.

If the member says that this was terrible implementation of a tax, of course from his philosophy any positive steps are terrible implementations. From our side of the House, assisting manufacturing so that they can export more out of this country or be more competitive with imports is a very positive thing to do. We did that.

I am happy to say that this party will take the tough decisions that that party over there has run away from for all the years that it has existed since 1967.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I must say I have listened to the member for Ontario with great interest. I do not think he has proven very much of anything with all his comments about how the government is taking tough decisions.