

Government Spending

Mr. Chrétien: I have 120, lines to go through, and I have only dealt with five.

Mr. Fairweather: That is all faked, and you know it.

Mr. Chrétien: No, it is not. This is money that the department were going to spend but which we have now cut, so it is not faked.

Mr. Fairweather: That is part of your problem, credibility.

Mr. Chrétien: In 1973-74 and 1974-75 the increase in the civil service was, on average, 6 per cent to 7 per cent a year. In the blue book that I have tabled for this fiscal year I stated it would be reduced to 4.1 per cent. In the budget of the previous minister of finance he and I proposed to reduce it further, by 1 per cent to 3.1 per cent. In the program for next year we see the growth of the public service as 1.5 per cent over this year. Every department is affected. Hon. members should visit Treasury Board where every week departments are asking us for more money and more man-years.

Mr. Forrestall: How big will the deficit be?

Mr. Chrétien: When I tabled the estimates in January, I said that the increase in expenditure this year compared with the previous year would be less than 16 per cent. Many members on the other side said that in light of the history of the government, that was not possible. I am telling them today that not only will it be less than 16 per cent, but it will be less than 15 per cent next year. I have a list of all these government expenditures. In the budget, the previous minister of finance said that the cash requirements of the government would be around \$35 billion, if I recall the figure correctly. That total remains unchanged. If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) has some fresh announcement to make, then he will make it; but we are still sticking by the budget predictions of July.

The government is proposing \$32.2 billion of expenditure. Legislation passed by this House of Commons accounts for 56 per cent of that total. Who is proposing that we do not pay old age security? Who is proposing that we do not pay the interest on the public debt? Who is proposing that we do not pay the provinces the fiscal transfer payments that the legislation of this House has guaranteed them? Who is proposing in this House that we do not pay family allowances? All these programs were voted for in this House; hon. members on all sides voted for them.

● (1550)

An hon. Member: Who proposes to cut out medicare?

Mr. Chrétien: Who proposes that this year we do not pay for hospital care? Who proposes that we do not pay unemployment insurance benefits? Who are those that propose we do not meet our medicare obligations?

An hon. Member: You are.

Mr. Chrétien: Who are those that do not agree we should pay Canada Assistance Plan benefits, post-secondary education assistance, military pensions, railway subsidies for the maintenance of branch lines, and so on? Who

[Mr. Forrestall.]

is proposing that we cut all these? I would like those members to get up and say that these programs are the ones that are no damned good and we should cut them. In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition did not propose one thing that we should cut from the budget of \$32 billion. The list I have just enumerated represents 56 per cent of the budget of the government.

We have certain contractual payments. Who is proposing that we do not pay for Manpower training programs in this land? Who does not want us to keep on paying \$252 million for sewage treatment plants and public housing projects under CMHC? Who is proposing that we do not make fiscal transfer payments to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories? By the way, I am glad to see that the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) is back in the House. We were right in appointing a Liberal senator in order to bring him back to Ottawa, as we have not seen him for a long time. Who is proposing that we not pay public service employee fringe benefits to the extent of \$95 million? Who is proposing that we cut legal aid grants to the provinces? This is another contractual payment. I would like hon. members to tell us which of these programs we should cut. Hon. members on the other side are silent. Get up and tell me which ones you want us to cut.

Mr. Howie: I don't want you to cut any of them, but isn't your minister of health trying to cut back on medicare?

Mr. Chrétien: No, I am talking about this fiscal year. Hon. members do not want to say. Let us go to another area.

Mr. Crouse: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I must challenge the statement the minister has just made. Only last Thursday in this House, when speaking on Bill C-73—

An hon. Member: What is the point of order?

Mr. Crouse: If the hon. member over there will keep quiet for a moment I will explain the point of order. If he will be as patient with me as I am with him, I will outline the point. It is simply this: the minister has said that no one from this side of the House has at any time offered any suggestion in respect of cuts that would be reasonable and would not affect the lifestyle of Canadians. Last Thursday, when speaking on Bill C-73, as recorded at page 8491 of *Hansard* I made concrete suggestions in this House which would cut at least \$500 million from the present budget. The minister has made no comment in respect of those suggestions. I ask him now if he will sincerely consider those proposals and, hopefully, take advantage of some of them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. This is clearly a matter of debate and not a point of order. The hon. member may wish to participate later in the debate.

Mr. Chrétien: In reply to the hon. member, what he is referring to is the consultants' fees referred to in the book published by my department. He suggested the amount involved was \$1 billion, but when I got to my feet I explained to him that there was an amount of \$486 million included in that to cover Manpower training programs. I would ask hon. members whether we should cut that. I