

The Budget

there will be no more cuts to achieve our targets, especially not in the area of social programs. We will achieve these targets nevertheless.

The finance minister knows this is not true. There is such a gap between what the Liberal government says and what it does that it is just astounding. It explains why the finance minister must on a daily basis so grossly exaggerate Reform policy in order to cover his real agenda.

In fact my Bloc colleagues in question period today were calling his statements demagoguery. That is the only way to describe his desperate defence of the course he is leading us down.

Some of the cuts in the budget should have been made a long time ago and I agree with them. However it is interesting and necessary to compare them against what the Liberal government said versus what it meant. I am not talking historically but just in recent memory.

As recently as a year and a half ago the Liberal Party said it was against free trade and it would pull out of the free trade agreement. What it meant was it would strengthen free trade, continue those agreements and expand them on a scale that was not foreseen before.

When the Liberal Party said it was committed to keeping Petro-Canada and would not privatize it, what it really meant was it would finish the job of privatization.

When the Liberal Party said it would guarantee funding for the CBC what it meant was it would guarantee that its funding would be continually cut.

The Liberal Party said a Liberal government would never cut the civil service, but what have we got here? Not only do we have retro-cuts, but what the Liberal government really meant was that it would cut the civil service at record levels and do it retroactively by reopening collective agreements.

The Liberal Party said a Liberal government would never cut transfer payments to the provinces. What it will not transfer to the provinces is additional authority or additional tax points, but it will cut the transfer payments to the provinces at a record level.

The Liberal government said it would never raise the tax burden on the middle class. That apparently did not include gas taxes which are paid by ordinary citizens of every class. It did not include limiting RRSP contributions which hit certainly at members of the upper middle class which I would distinguish from the rich. It would raise utility taxes on ordinary consumers, providing they live in Alberta and a few other select areas of the country. It is now prepared to raise tobacco taxes which fall generally on those with lower than average incomes. The Liberal Party said it would never raise taxes on the middle class

but what it really meant was most of the tax increases will be on the middle class.

• (1550)

The Prime Minister said he would never allow a society where we see beggars in the streets. What he really meant was he would never walk to work but instead drive by in his limousine so he never sees the beggars that we all meet every single day that we come here.

The Liberal Party now says that it will never cut health care, unemployment insurance, old age security, the Canada pension plan, child care or any of those plans. It says it will never cut them like the Reform Party intends to cut them. What the Liberal government really means is that it is not going to tell Canadians what those cuts are until they come. It is not going to bring them in until the debt and the interest has drained off every red cent necessary to have a program of any kind.

What the Liberal government also said was that generally it will never cut the social security of Canadians. What do the Liberals really mean when they say all these things about compassion and sacrifice? They mean they will never take MPs off their gold-plated pension plan and you will never see MPs begging in the streets.

The leader of the Reform Party proposed last week a plan for a balanced budget with social programs that are clearly smaller and more decentralized than we have today. These are not popular measures and we know that. Those programs are based on clear objectives and values with dollars that are available today.

As bad as the Minister of Finance will paint this, these programs are going to look very good by the time we find out what the government really plans to do with social programs.

The choice is very simple. Canadians will have accept the tough medicine necessary to get us back to fiscal health. The alternative is to buy the same snake oil from the same snake oil salesman at a price that is going to go up and up and up.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the member speak all I heard were negatives and misinformation.

The member somehow painted the reduction of the civil service by 45,000 jobs as a negative when in fact the government is refocusing through program review the downsizing. There will be surplus staff. The member clearly cannot be opposed to eliminating surplus staff in a compassionate way.

The member complains about the transfers to the provinces, yet in the Reform alternative budget the amount of hit to seniors, to the disadvantaged, to those who need health care, is drastically heavier. He paints the RRSP alternatives as if something is wrong. The RRSP limits in fact will be increasing to \$15,500 from the current year of \$13,500.