

Government Orders

By reducing the deficit and the debt we will remove one of the more serious pressures on inflation. We are extending the expenditure control plan. We have released our discussion paper on spending caps legislation and we will move, as soon as we can, to pass the legislation which will create the debt servicing and reduction fund.

The third key element of the plan is the restraint of government spending. We state in the budget that operating budgets will be frozen at current levels and the wages and salaries of cabinet ministers, MPs, all Order in Council appointments and all federal public servants will be tightly restrained—zero, three and three.

There has been a lot of misinformation about the senior public servants. I would remind members of the House what in fact occurs in terms of senior public servants. Under a structure put in place by the previous government, there is an outside committee that looks at the salaries of senior civil servants, that looks at comparable rates in the private sector and makes a recommendation to the government. They recommended for the period of time June 1, 1990 to June 1, 1991 that the increase be 6.2 per cent, I believe. We said no because we had introduced the budget with the 0 per cent and for that period it would be 4.2 per cent, but as of June 1 it would be 0 per cent for senior managers, no increase that people are talking about—0 per cent.

During that period of time from September 1, 1990 to September 1, 1991 PSAC got 4.8 per cent. They start at different periods. It is wrong to suggest they got an increase, it was for a period of time that ended last June. They were due for another increase June 1 and that increase is 0 per cent. They will be due for a 3 per cent increase next year on June 1 under this plan and public servants would be due for an increase of 3 per cent next September 1 and members of Parliament will be due for a 3 per cent increase January, 1993. So we are all getting 0 per cent.

This false information of suggesting that somehow some other group has been looked after is simply that, it is absolutely false.

Now anyone who makes the claim that we propose this wage package to public servants in order to pick a fight or to cause a strike forgets about the budget. Presumably they also question the motives of other sectors and

governments in society who are also asking for restraint from their employees.

I remind the House that the Government of New Brunswick negotiated an agreement and two months later rolled it back and froze the salaries. The Government of Nova Scotia did the same thing. The Government of Quebec, the Government of Newfoundland, the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Saskatchewan put in restraints. In my city, as a result of restraint in the oil and gas industry over the last two years, 14,000 employees in the oil and gas industry have been laid off. They do not have job security, they are laid off because of the state of the economy.

Who in this House is going to say we want higher oil and gas prices so that those individuals will not be laid off? Who in this House is going to say we want higher taxes so that we can pay the public servants higher rates? Who is going to have the integrity to be honest that the money comes from the taxpayers' pockets and you are going to have to raise the taxes if you are going to give away more of that taxpayer's money to whomever? When you have the integrity to do that you deserve to be listened to, but until then, screaming and yelling and putting out false information does not impress those who have the responsibility to look after things.

The hypocrisy of some is beyond belief. April 19 in *The Toronto Star*, Leslie Papp reporting from Vancouver stated: "Delegates at the Public Service Alliance of Canada convention voted to slash the union's budget by \$1.8 million each year over the next three years, leaving 14 staff positions vacant and another six to be cut by attrition." They cut out staff of PSAC's own employees. Worse, after voting, delegates walked past upset employees asking them where they were working next week. Is that your pink slip? "The comments left two of the union workers in tears", staff members said. Then they all got together and said: "Accusing Ottawa of committing economic crimes". "This government will not listen to reason", is being said.

• (1740)

Then he said he understood why the staff was bitter. It has got to be frustrated, but we are in a tight situation. He is not in a different situation than us. He had an option. He could have raised the fees. He could have raised the union dues to pay these employees and not lay off 20 people. He could have borrowed the money to