

Government Orders

I challenge this concept of the previous speaker when he says we always oppose because we are in opposition. No, we are here to debate the issues. I am very deeply committed to not reduce myself to name calling. Let us stay on the issues and if we agree, then let us say we agree.

On reducing the UIC rates, I really could not agree with the member more. As was previously stated today, if that reduction of seven cents is so significant in creating jobs, perhaps we ought to look at it further.

At the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology where I worked before, 750 instructors together with the employer portion contribute an amount of money which would give about 60 people jobs, each at \$35,000 a year. That is from 750 instructors at NAIT.

Clearly that money left in the hands of the individual would be very useful in creating real ongoing jobs. Someone could then afford to have their leaking roof fixed instead of just paying their taxes and UIC premiums and getting nothing for it. The individual would have a job instead of the benefit of UIC.

I appreciate very much those members in the Bloc who are saying that we are threatening the very poorest among us, but that is very narrow thinking. That is saying that all we can do to help poor people is to give them a handout in the form of UIC or welfare. The most significant thing we can do for them is, as the hon. member just said in his speech, to provide an economic climate in which there is prosperity. That is done by reducing government spending and allowing the marketplace to be strong.

I appreciate the member's speech. He has said a lot of good things, but I would encourage him to listen more carefully before he jumps to the conclusion that we are always opposing. We are not.

• (1640)

Mr. Telegdi: Mr. Speaker, let me respond to that. I will expect Reform Party members to support us whenever we say we are going to have a reduction but the feeling I always get from them is that we have not cut enough. There is not that sense that we have a balance in how much we have cut. I listened to the hon. member and the only thing missing was his saying that if we were to cut more his party would have supported it more. I am calling on that recognition to find a balance.

In the debate on the infrastructure program Reform Party members opposed it in general, as a party and as individuals. I can only point out that is part of the balanced approach and investing in the infrastructure of this country will give us the opportunity to have growth. That is a role for government in the expenditure of public funds. Private enterprise is not in the

business of building public facilities such as roads, sewage treatment plants, and what have you.

I remind Reform members to be a little more balanced in terms of the cuts and to recognize that cuts alone without control are not going to solve our economic woes. We have to have a much more constrained level of spending. We have to be much more fiscally prudent. At the same time we also have investments to make which we as a government believe we have to do.

Ms. Margaret Bridgman (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the hon. member for Waterloo.

In relation to the opposition, his statement was that government proposes programs and the opposition opposes programs. As my colleague has pointed out, our role in opposition is not to *carte blanche* oppose programs. It is to identify possible weaknesses or omissions and to offer constructive criticism and possible alternative solutions.

The final decision still rests with the party in power. Its role is to make those decisions possibly based on other considerations. Our possible options may appear as not being constructive but on the other hand the decision is there for the government to make.

I am extremely pleased the member is as aware of Reform policy as he is of his red book. He reminded me of a lot of Reform policy today in his speech.

The hon. member made reference to the fact that 85 per cent of jobs are provided by small business and he also made reference to high tech coming into small business. I would like to hear his comments in relation to high tech possibly eliminating a number of jobs in small businesses and it is the small businesses that are being hit by taxes and low wages, et cetera.

Mr. Telegdi: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there is a historical role to official opposition parties and third parties and other oppositions that are not official.

What I saw when I walked into this House today is something we see every day. Canadians come from across this country. They take pictures and have great respect for this institution of ours. It amazes me that if I were to listen to the debate in this House long enough I would get the impression we were a third world country and we were going to be bankrupt next week and the whole country was going to fall to pieces. We know that is not the case. I was looking forward to a kinder and gentler House. We started off talking about that but somehow the rhetoric since the start of this 35th Parliament has not followed that up.

Certainly on the second point the member says she is glad I am aware of Reform policies. The point that needs to be made is that most members of the House are new. The class of '93 has a different perspective from that of previous Parliaments.