

Government Orders

to pay for these social programs. He redistributed wealth to everyone whether they needed it or not.

● (1220)

We can take, for example, senior citizens. The ex-leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Pierre Trudeau, is receiving the old age security even though he is reputed to be a millionaire. Is that the idea of redistributing wealth of the hon. member for Dartmouth?

He mentions the fact that government can no longer deliver these programs. My suggestion to the hon. member is that we should be looking at social programs which direct the money to those in need, the poor in this country. We should not be making general sweeping blanket statements of redistributing wealth to all those who fall into any particular category as defined by the Liberal Party.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): I am happy that the hon. member has asked the question.

If I listen to the policies of the Reform Party it does not believe that government should try as part of a national objective to ensure that no matter where one lives in this country that one has access to quality post-secondary education. Perhaps many members on the Reform side, if those policies and programs were not in place, would not have been able to attain the seats that they have. They would not have been able to find themselves in a position to get the education that has allowed them to work in their communities and to find a seat in this House.

Just maybe, without those darned Liberal policies that the member seems to be so intent on criticizing during this debate, some individuals would not have been able to access a health care system that ensures that people do not go bankrupt if they have a ruptured gall bladder in this country.

Just maybe, if the members of the Reform Party are so intent on supporting a system where there is no sense of collective ownership of wealth in this country, then some of their colleagues from Saskatchewan and some of their colleagues from the other provinces in western Canada would not have been able to get the basic services delivered to them in their home province that Canadians and members of the Reform Party have come to expect.

Mr. Cliff Breitkreuz (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend to you belated congratulations on your appointment to the Speaker's chair. I wish you well as you and your colleagues guide the debate in this, the highest tribunal in the land.

I thank the people of Yellowhead for their support on October 25. I will endeavour to serve my constituents well.

In my comments I will be touching on two matters: first, a few observations about the riding I am privileged to represent; and, second, I will attempt to show what happened to countries that have attempted to spend themselves into prosperity. If we do not bring spending under control in this country, be it social or other spending, we may well find ourselves going down the same road.

First, I have a few comments on my riding. Yellowhead is a huge riding, the third largest federal riding in Alberta. It is interesting to note that geographically the configuration of Yellowhead is similar to that of the state of Texas. In addition, both are rich in oil and beef cattle.

Yellowhead also has huge deposits of gas and coal and an active forest industry.

Nestled in the Rocky Mountains is the jewel of the Rockies, Jasper. Our nation's most spectacular park, Jasper National Park, attracts tourists from around the world every day of the year.

The 90,000 plus people who live within the borders of Yellowhead are generally an independent lot. Business deals are still clinched with a handshake as entrepreneurs engage in the time proven activity of human endeavour, the free enterprise system. In general, unemployment is not the concern that it is in other parts of the country.

I am at once proud and humbled in the opportunity to represent and serve these people in this place. These folks are saying to me, as other Canadians are saying to their elected people, that enough is enough; enough spending on programs they do not want, they did not ask for and certainly do not want to pay for. Increasingly, people are realizing that government spending is taking us all down a dead end road to the precipice, to the brink. The brakes must be applied so that this nation can edge back from the brink of economic disaster.

● (1225)

I commend the government for this social affairs debate. I am confident that it will seriously consider suggestions made in this House and elsewhere when the restructuring of these programs begin.

Overspending is not just a phenomenon of the 20th century. For centuries countries have overspent. History is littered with examples of great empires that have been reduced to shadows of their former greatness.

For centuries, economists, historians and observers have documented what causes dominant countries to experience economic decline. We need not go back to ancient civilizations, to antiquity for examples. We only need to go back to the early modern period, to the time of the gun powder revolution which set in motion some of the more profound changes in modern history.