

Government Orders

current budget that is before us. Did you know that it is still possible for businessmen to write off the services of escorts going to lunch?

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Barrett: My dear friend says "no" and shakes his head. The department's response to this is to say that it has no way of monitoring this. The fact is that some of those escort services are out and out hooker shops and this government is permitting people to clearly deduct the services of hookers as a business expense.

Mr. McDermid: That's not true and you know it.

Mr. Barrett: My dear friend may interfere all he wants across the floor, but the reality is that the department itself admits publicly that it has no way of monitoring this.

Mr. Fee: Why don't you listen to what the minister says?

Mr. Barrett: All right my dear friends, you are very quick at heckling but very slow on actually taking some action.

I want to tell you that as it stands today, and I know it clearly, the fact is that hookers can still be deducted as a business expense. That is hardly appropriate in this day and age and hardly appropriate at a time when this country is involved in attempting to cut back services right across the line. When it comes to certain services, they overlook it.

Mr. McDermid: Did you do it?

Mr. Barrett: My dear friend, did I?

Mr. McDermid: How do you know?

Mr. Barrett: I do not have business deductions.

An hon. member: Neither do they.

Mr. Barrett: Look, if you want to interrupt just stand up on a point of order and I will rule on it.

Mr. McDermid: On a point of order.

Mr. Barrett: I ruled you out of order.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Minister of National Revenue yesterday made it very clear that that was not a fact.

Mr. Barrett: That is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I cannot hear the point of order. How can I rule on it?

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is that the hon. member is standing here and giving out information that is not true. In fact, the Minister of Finance yesterday—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order. It is a point of debate.

Mr. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, thank you for keeping the House in order and pointing out the member who is suggesting a member is not telling the truth is himself out of order.

Having said that, the reality is as I have said it.

To go on to other areas of cutbacks, I want to go from a particular to a universal. The fact is that this government has deliberately moved off of any responsibility right across this country of assisting provinces in their budgeting for the economic devastation that has been caused by this government.

We have 1.5 million unemployed people in this country, many of whose only source of income is unemployment insurance. When they run out of unemployment insurance eligibility, although the government is increasing their share toward unemployment insurance payments, they run out of unemployment insurance. Then they are on welfare and that is where this government walks away, particularly in three provinces, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, because of the capping.

What it is doing—I know the Chair has no part of this—is saying: "If you are suffering out there, you are the victims of economic restructuring". It is saying: "If you are suffering out there, you are the victims of an economic restructuring". It is an economic restructuring that somebody has to sacrifice themselves for and it might as well be the poor, the unemployed and the unemployables.

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This government in this budget has not made one single gesture of understanding what peril it has put this nation in, in terms of the huge costs to provinces of welfare. This government has created more welfare problems in its eight years in power than we have seen in a generation before. Its response to dealing with this is to blame the Liberals. Lord knows, they need the blame. But we find the two old line parties trading off whose recession was worse. Is that the way to deal with a country? We are not here to talk about whose recession is the worst. Both of them caused the recession. We are