

Government Orders

have been doing in the past without the proper remedies to the difficulties that students are faced with.

I can see that my time is up but I wanted to say that the 3 per cent tax has got to go, as the minister has promised in the past.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of Bill C-76, the budget implementation legislation. I might say in passing that it is important for the House and people to be aware of what is before the House today. It is a matter that was approved in principle when the budget was approved by this House almost a year ago.

I consider it somewhat of an anomaly of our system that a proposal can be approved in the budget, but consequential legislation follows, even if it takes a year before it gets there. When I heard the gnashing of teeth, the grunts and the groans and the talk about jackboots from my hon. friends on the other side of this place about the use of time allocation in this debate, I think it is important to get all the cards on the table and remember that it has been a year since this House approved in principle this legislation. The idea that the debate on it should be dragged out is something that my hon. friends have done not only with this legislation but other bills that this House has considered recently.

It is important that we put it in perspective. The use of time allocation is to ensure that the government which has been given a mandate by the people in an election in actual fact can govern. I would also remind my hon. friends that time allocation was first brought in by a Liberal government some years ago. So we should put all this into perspective.

The purpose of Parliament is to debate legislation, but not to debate it interminably. The issues should be brought forward, both for and against the cause and then vote and get on with the business of the day.

I notice that every single proposal that this government has brought forward to bring the finances of this nation under control has been opposed by our friends on the other side. We have seen recently what their alternative suggestions are, very profound ones like getting rid of the GST but not having any idea whatsoever what it is going to be replaced with. That is the extent of intellectual depth they are offering to the public with respect to restraint.

I have no hesitation at all in standing and supporting the government's use of time allocation in order that this legislation can be proceeded with so that the business of Canadians can be got on with.

The 1992 budget was devoted to deficit reduction and fiscal restraint with a view to sustained economic growth for Canadians. The measures in Bill C-76 are dedicated to these goals, as the name of the bill implies, the 1992 budget implementation act. Here we are, well into 1993, still having our friends on the other side do what they can to drag out this process as long as possible.

Bill C-76 deals with three bills: the Salaries Act, the Canada Student Loans Act and the Lobby Registration Act.

The amendments to the Salaries Act are part of the government's commitment to fiscal restraint, taking a previous salary freeze one step further by reducing the Prime Minister's salary and the salaries of all the cabinet ministers by 5 per cent, showing that this government leads by example, it does not impose situations on others that it is not prepared to impose upon itself. It is necessary as well to update and improve the Canada Student Loans Program to ensure that it continues to provide assistance to needy students. However, I am not going to dwell on that particular amendment, as it was discussed exhaustively in committee and I might say exhaustively in this House during the debate last Friday.

• (1300)

I want to focus on the amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act. The Minister of Finance indicated in his 1992 budget that the government intended to strengthen its cost recovery performance. Canadians told the government that they want government to be fiscally responsible. That is our perception of what the public wants. That is what we are trying to deliver as a government, even though every single measure for fiscal restraint that this government has brought forward has been opposed by the free spenders on the other side of this place.

Under Bill C-76 the Governor in Council will be able to charge lobbyists a registration fee when registering under the Lobbyists Registration Act. In concert with the government's approach to so many other things, the fee will be established in consultation with the private sector so that those who use the service will be underwriting the cost of it.

Under Bill C-76 as well the Crown will be able to sue in the civil courts to recover unpaid fees because fees owing will now be a debt to the Crown. In addition the current penalty avoidance incentives which exist to encourage compliance with the act will extend to regis-