

The Budget

fought, unemployment countered and something done, and soon, to get Canadian prosperity back into its stride, the government must begin to plan ahead—not timidly, not tentatively—but boldly, imaginatively and courageously”.

It is no coincidence that the person with the Prime Minister is the son of the individual who made this statement. He is the person, the son of Paul Martin, Senior, who will return stability, confidence and prosperity to Canada.

Furthermore, Canadians may be assured that their federal government will provide the leadership sought by the provinces. If we are now facing a new opposition consisting of two parties, the Reformers and the Bloc Québécois, it is because the Mulroney government did not meet the provinces' call for leadership.

For this very reason, the Liberal team will respond to this call by the provinces and these new parties will inevitably disappear.

• (1615)

[English]

In conclusion, I would like to bring to the attention of the House another issue in the budget. I would like to offer the services of my riding and my region to help the Minister of Finance fulfil this commitment. Sudbury and the region of Nickel Belt have rich mines, skilled workers and all the skills and institutions in place to provide to the Government of Canada the new \$2 coin that is referred to in the budget. We would be pleased to provide that service for the rest of Canada.

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I have heard this member and others before him make the comment that we are targeting spending better with this budget.

The most substantial spending measure in this budget is as a result of what was not done rather than as a result of what was done. That is the increase in interest payments on the debt.

Does that mean that it is the deliberate intention of this government to target spending more to interest payments than in the past?

Mr. Bonin: Madam Speaker, this question has been asked so many times in the House. I will attempt to answer it differently because it seems that Reform members do not understand.

There is a balance to be offered when there is such a huge problem as we have in this country. We inherited the problem.

I like to compare it with a program I saw on TV. In New York City the underground infrastructure of the water system is so old and rusty that they cannot check to see if a valve is working. There is so much rust that the valve will break if they turn it. I like to make that comparison.

The people I share this with, the people of my riding and other ridings and the people from my party and other parties, except for the Reform Party, seem to relate that there is a danger in overkill.

Definitely, Canadians and the Liberal government would like to say let us slash and burn and there is no more debt. The only serious difficulty is it would affect human beings. That is the part the Reform Party cannot associate with. We include it in our answers and try to explain to them that they have to have some compassion. That word is used often by a good many members in this House but it is never used by members of the Reform Party.

A society with compassion is often judged by the way it treat its seniors. Taking \$3 billion out of the seniors' pockets is not my idea of compassion. I have answered the question for the people who understand. I feel like the minister or the priest who preaches to the people who do not practise. They sit there having heard the answer so many times and still they do not understand.

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like above all to respond to the initial remarks made by the member for Nickel Belt. He seems to regard it as quite an exploit that, thanks to Canadian federalism, he is still able to rise in this House and speak in French.

I must say, it is very difficult for me to understand how this view can be so easily accepted since the opposite would indicate assimilation. So he admits that it is exceptional that he has not been assimilated.

As he comes from a French speaking community, I find it rather difficult to understand how someone like him could say that; he is aware of the incredible rates of assimilation in Canada. In 1971, the rate of assimilation for all English speaking provinces was 27 per cent, but by 1991 it had increased to 37 per cent.

• (1620)

Equally, he is a member of a government whose language commissioner recently released a totally shocking report on this government's inability to provide francophones in other provinces with services in French. He is also a member of this government which will make cuts to the CBC, no doubt equally in the French and English networks, without realizing that the French network has been discriminated against for 20 years, although audience ratings are identical and budgets are one third higher for the English network, identical ratings and identical schedules, unless I can be convinced that the English language CBC network is on the air 36 hours a day, which I would find very difficult to understand.