

Government Orders

[English]

In looking at the reasons for this bill, I can only conclude that its purpose is to bamboozle Canadians into thinking that somehow the government has a grip on its expenditure programs. The speech by the Minister of State for Privatization this morning was further evidence of a complete and utter inability to deal with these issues in a rational and sensible way. It is clear evidence that the government has lost its grip.

While I am on my feet, might I suggest that Your Honour take the power to adjourn this House into your hands, since there is no minister here who is able to respond and listen to this debate on a government measure. It is the practice that ministers must be here for debates on government bills. I would ask you to take the matter into your hands and adjourn the House in the absence of any minister.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member has been in Parliament long enough to know that it is not our practice to refer to the presence or the absence of fellow members. Although he is referring to an established tradition, the fact remains that it is not an absolute necessity for the debate to continue. I would therefore ask the hon. member to carry on.

[English]

Mr. Milliken: I think it shows a complete callous disregard for the importance of this Chamber that this is the case, but I will continue with my speech in spite of this lack of personnel.

I wanted to talk about the fact that the government itself in 1984 indicated how serious Canada's economic situation was. It is from this 1984 report, this 1984 statement if you like, that we learned how terrible it was that Canada had been governed by the Liberal Party for the previous many years. The government went to great lengths to point out that if the policies of the previous government were followed, certain economic consequences of great magnitude would befall Canadians, and somehow our country would simply go to pieces with the continuation of those policies.

Indeed, there was a great deal of trumpeting and fanfare by the then Minister of Finance that the changes he was about to announce were going to solve Canada's

economic woes. Somehow by checking the policies of the previous administration, Canadians would be brought from the brink of disaster into a great new golden age.

Unfortunately the Minister of Finance was wrong then, and has been wrong with every pronouncement he has made ever since. The statement applies to both the former Minister of Finance and the current Minister of Finance. Both have failed Canadians and this government has failed Canadians. It has been a disaster for Canada. Canadians are just sitting waiting for an opportunity to throw this government out of office. We are waiting for an opportunity for an election and this bill is an attempt by the government to shore up its dwindling electoral opportunities and dwindling chances. I suggest it is an inappropriate effort. It is a silly ridiculous effort and it is a complete waste of time of this House to introduce a measure as stupid as this particular bill.

The government stated in 1984 that if the previous government's proposals or policies were not changed, then budgetary expenditures would increase by 55 per cent in those financial years between 1983-84, and 1990-91. Budgetary expenditures would go up 55 per cent if Liberal policies were followed. We keep hearing how Liberal policies were the root of all evil. Well, throughout that same period while the Minister of Finance was in office, budgetary expenditures in fact went up by 69 per cent, not 55 per cent as they would have done under the previous government.

Whose policies are to blame for the deficit today? If they had only gone up 55 per cent, think how much we would have saved. They went up 69 per cent because of this government's incompetent policies.

The government predicted that budgetary revenues would have to swell by 76 per cent if the previous government's policies were pursued. In fact they went up by 86 per cent largely because of the enormous additional burden of taxation levied by the government opposite to cover its lavish spending. There is no other reason for it.

It claimed that the deficit would be \$37 billion in 1991. It did a little better there. Because it raised taxes so much, it got it down to \$30.6 billion, which was barely lower than what was projected. Of course it is now rising and we will hear more about that I expect next week.