

*Government Orders*

We believe it is time to act. The government was elected in October last year and we are now in March. We are now going to undertake studies, studies whose results will be reported to us in approximately six months. If the government had acted quickly and decisively when it was first elected, we would have the results of these studies well before the summer break, and a budget could reflect such quick and decisive action.

Does the government not realize that by reducing and subsequently eliminating the deficit we will eventually be able to start paying down the national debt?

• (1110)

By reducing and eliminating the deficit we would have in a very short period taxpayers' money freed up so that taxes could be reduced, thus stimulating the economy or perhaps this money could be used for retraining or to help industry, manufacturing, expand or retool so that permanent long term jobs are created.

Action on the expenditure side, action to reduce expenditure, will return to us as Canadians the economic freedom to choose which we have not enjoyed for many years. Again, what do we hear from the government? In three years the deficit will be 3 per cent of GDP. What does this mean?

It means that any hope of dealing with the country's debt is put off until the next century. We will still be devoting a huge amount of taxpayers' dollars to pay the interest on the debt without any hope of encroaching on the principal for many years.

If the government is not prepared to act on the expenditure side, I am serving notice today that we in the Reform Party are ready to act.

Each line item of each departmental expenditure plan will be scrutinized carefully by members of this party when the estimates are in committee. We will ask each minister and each deputy minister to justify every penny of the departmental expenditure plans. When we find expenditures which we believe are not crucial to the well-being of the people of Canada we will vote against them. The government wants to consult with members of this House. We will give the government consultation.

Second, I will press the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the government House leader to recommend the creation of a permanent standing committee of this House whose sole job would be to review the spending estimates of government departments.

In 1983 the special committee created to study the standing orders and procedures of the House recommended an elaborate series of estimate review committees in its fifth report to this House. My proposal is simply to create one such committee which would in the course of the fiscal year scrutinize very

carefully the estimates of perhaps only three government departments. It would then report back to this House and also to the standing committee which deals with a particular department on a regular basis.

This information could then be used by the departmental standing committee when the minister came back for supplementary spending estimates or in the following year when new spending plans are referred to the departmental standing committee.

The fiscal responsibility committee which I recommend be established would during the life of a Parliament scrutinize in detail the spending plans of virtually all government departments. This would not be glamorous work but it is the kind of work that is needed, the kind of tough work the government does not seem prepared to do, at least at this time.

I can assure my friends opposite that this is the kind of work that we in the Reform Party were elected to do and we are quite willing to spend the long and necessary hours to reduce government expenditures.

The time has come for action, not for talk. Canadians are a fiscally responsible people. They do not live beyond their means. If in a family something cannot be afforded then spending priorities change. We do not expect families to run out and borrow every time they see a new item they want to buy. Why should government be any different?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize because at the very beginning I should have told you on behalf of the whip, pursuant to Standing Order 43(2), we will be dividing our time this morning.

**Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry):** Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, I would like to congratulate her on her remarks. There are some points about the budget that she did not include in her remarks.

She said that we were afraid to take on the tough decisions. I believe that is not an accurate assessment. We did announce policy reviews in our social security system, in defence, foreign aid, the goods and services tax which is being reviewed in committee right now for an alternative. We will begin our study in the industry committee in two weeks where we will have public accountability of financial institutions in Canada: a program review, overlap and duplication, tariffs and the paper burden. All of these are concrete actions taking place right now.

• (1115)

It is important we not leave in the public's mind the thought that the Reform Party is the only party interested in reducing or eliminating waste. If people can bring forward ideas on how to eliminate or reduce waste in a particular area we welcome their letters, phone calls or faxes. It is the same type of information the member receives as well.