

Supply

● (1310)

Mr. Culbert: Mr. Speaker, relative to the points and concerns made by my hon. colleague across the way, I should say first of all that I am not sure how the Reform Party set its goals low as he has suggested. However the Liberal way is to set goals that are a challenge, yet goals that are achievable even though they may be somewhat difficult to achieve. We as a Liberal government have set those goals and we will achieve them, as everyone well knows.

I agree with my hon. colleague across the way that no question, when talking about compound interest, it is a wonderful thing when you are receiving it or if you have dollars to invest and can receive it. It multiplies day in and day out and is a wonderful thing. He is absolutely right. It is a terrible thing when it is the other way around and you are paying your debts. Whether it be us in our private lives, or business, or certainly as government, there is no question it is a terrible thing.

Those goals have to be set and we have to meet those goals and those challenges each step of the way as we go along. In this case we will meet our first goal of reaching 3 per cent of the gross domestic product. Our next goal will be on a balanced budget. Following that, we will break the back of this country's debt. We will take hold of these finances for years and years to come.

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the remarks made by my colleague across the way.

We hear from these Liberal members today about how essential it is for government to be involved in the economy and how if we can do things just a little better, if government can just get it right, things will get better in Canada.

We hear about complexity and we hear about the wider economic reality as if these were some buzz phrases that meant that government has to stay involved in the economy. I would suggest that we have had 25 or 30 years of government involved in the economy, trying to direct the economy, trying to drive us to where it would like us to be and it has failed miserably.

There is a model right now for government to emulate and that is Mr. Klein's government in Alberta. Mr. Klein has done some very courageous things starting with the elimination of the MLA's pension plan and a reduction of the MLA's remuneration. He has demonstrated leadership at the top.

Then he has gone on from there to make across the board cuts, major cuts in his government's spending. The reality of that is that Alberta is creating jobs. It is instilling investor confidence and it is showing the people in Alberta that it is serious about reducing its debt and its deficit.

Would the member across the way not agree that is the model for this government to be following rather than to be following the tired old ideas that have not worked and will continue not to work if this government continues on its present course of action?

Mr. Culbert: Mr. Speaker, first I should say that government's involvement is certainly to set an economic confidence in this country in which the business and industry communities can build economically to create those jobs. That is where the jobs come from. The member is right. They do not come directly from government. They come from government indirectly because government has to set that confidence, that pace and that tone economically in the country for that to happen. That is exactly what this government is doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, today we are discussing a motion by the Reform Party whose purpose is, basically, to make the government reduce its spending so as to improve the state of public finances. There is nothing wrong with the principle as such. The motion also wants the government to avoid raising taxes and to downsize government. The Bloc Québécois certainly has no trouble accepting these three principles.

However, the position behind this motion is not necessarily one we can embrace. Our position on the economy is certainly not that of the Reform Party, certainly not the position of the right, which says that economic growth depends largely on what the wealthiest in our society contribute to the economy.

● (1315)

This is often the group they try to defend, either by proposing a single tax or other measures to avoid any form of progressive taxation or redistribution. There are certainly major differences in how the role of government is viewed with respect to redistribution of income. In any case, since it came to power, this government has done very little to improve public finances.

A few weeks from now, we will be told that by the end of the fiscal year, we will have a deficit of about 38 or 39 billion dollars, in addition to a debt of over \$500 billion, accumulated during the past twenty years. This is hardly a reason to celebrate.

However, I know some members will celebrate, because the deficit will be one or two billion dollars less than the original forecast. However, whether the deficit is on target is irrelevant. We have to consider the facts.

The facts are that we will still have a very substantial deficit of 37 or 38 billion dollars, as I said earlier, and perhaps even 39 billion, if the government tries to include some of next year's