

The Budget

• (1515)

Acceptance will result from a sense of fair play because it was not only air command that was closed, but naval command in the Atlantic region and army command in Quebec were also closed.

I can tell members there were people in Winnipeg who thought that we would not be fair, that we might close air command but we certainly would not close army command in Quebec. It was done because the minister and the government believe in fairness.

Manitobans will be able to appreciate that we were not singled out for cuts. All regions have been affected. We cannot forget that these closures are significant to their respective regions but we will not lose sight of the fact that an entire level of management has been removed at considerable saving to all Canadian taxpayers.

The budget introduced yesterday redefines Canada and its relationship with the provinces. Canadians are entering a new era, a significant step has been taken toward eliminating the culture of victimization which we have created. At long last, government has sought to ensure that fundamental values are preserved while appreciating the inherent differences among provinces. Through the decentralization of airports in Canada, for example, the government is preserving its role of guardian but accepts the realization that people in Winnipeg, Toronto and Barrie, Ontario are able to oversee the successful operation of their local airports.

These efforts not only remove layers of bureaucracy but also serve as positive motivation for all Canadians who are able to function within a federation and not be victims of our regional identities.

There is more to government than just cutting. There is smart government which appreciates the social, cultural and moral obligations. Perhaps now we can move beyond an attitude that asks: What do you expect in a regional country? Of course we are going to complain. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will come to appreciate the notion of fair play and understand that Quebec may receive \$2 billion less in transfer payments but that all the provinces will experience the same kind of reductions.

Perhaps members opposite will learn something of fair play and refrain from trying to manipulate reality to suit a limited agenda. I am referring to comments made that immigrants living in Quebec should not be allowed to vote in a referendum, the question evolving to include the notion of who is a real Quebecer and who is not. We must work from our most common denominator. We are all Canadians and we should all be entitled to the pain and to the glory.

Ironically, most times, leadership is equated to economic performance. President Clinton is doing the very same thing across the border as we are doing here. He is trimming the

bureaucracy and reducing the debt. Despite President Clinton's efforts the economic outlook is not nearly as positive as it is in Canada. Yet Americans seem to believe in themselves and in their ability to overcome any adversity.

In Canada, however, we are being convinced how bad it really is. We listen to the leader of the third party, who when talking with the media uses words like dishonest, cowardly and hypocritical. I wonder how we can forget that ever-ominous threat that the chickens will come home to roost. I suspect that the grassroots are having their geese cooked. The political right would have issues decided by polls. It would be democracy by telephone. There would be no consultation, no research, no compromise or leadership. Opinion would reign supreme.

I suspect that the Reform leader would soon find out that burdening every Canadian with every decision would have a number of disastrous results, much like a grassroots guru attempting to split atoms like he splits economic hairs.

This may come as a surprise to members opposite but the reason behind democracy and having an elected representative is the notion of efficiency and leadership. To govern is to choose.

• (1520)

If we are to survive we must learn to believe in ourselves and in this great country. We must accept the economic and social realities and strive for tomorrow. Some would suggest that things can only get better, but I submit to the House that it is a subjective goal.

In the eyes of the United Nations, Canadians live in the best country in the world. In a recent Swiss survey four Canadian cities were considered among the 12 best places in the world to live. Other nations and other cultures believe in and envy the Canadian reality. The question now is: Why are Canadians so cranky? Why is it that the majority of Canadians feel victimized in one way or another?

Our challenge is to create a culture not of victims but of victors. We must nurture the creation of a culture in which we act out of compassion for others, not necessarily only for monetary compensation. Success should be measured by the results, not by the amount of money spent. Let me repeat, success should be measured on the basis of results. These results must be evaluated both according to economic criteria and social criteria. That is what members opposite fail to appreciate about the minister's budget of yesterday.

When has a Reformer asked us to think of others before thinking of our own individual interests? When has the Leader of the Opposition considered the wants of Quebecers when he muses about postponing the referendum date so as to be able to manipulate the results? This is not democracy. When will Canadians be allowed to seek appreciation and elevate their