

Government Orders

I met a young man who has a bachelor's degree in economics. He had to go to the United States because there was no work for him here in Canada. He is a very intelligent young man who had great success in university, and there is nothing for him here in Canada.

In my riding now, there is a man of about 50 who lost his job because of cuts in the place where he was working. It was not because of his ability—he was very competent, very loyal, very hard-working—but cuts were made. He has been looking for work for more than a year and he has not found anything yet. Can you imagine the despair he feels and the despair in his family because he cannot find work?

I know an electrician who has worked for a number of companies, is very competent, and has all kind of references indicating he is very good at his trade. He is still looking, but there are no jobs.

And what about small business people who have gone bankrupt? And what about all those people who during the past year tried to set up a business and invested a lot of money in the process, and because of the recession, because of our very high dollar in relation to the U.S. dollar and also because at the time, interest rates were very high, were unable to survive?

We have food banks operating at this very moment, where 1.8 million Canadians will go this year if they do not want to starve. As you know, 40 per cent are children and teenagers. In this country, food banks are running out of food, and I think that is appalling.

[English]

I want to talk about tax increases because that has been a burden for Canadians. We all know that there is less ability to purchase now what we could a few years ago, in spite of some increases in certain sectors, because the tax increases have taken away more than we have received in almost every single area. The losses by the middle class, the very motor of Canada, the people upon whom we count in order to finance a number of the programs that we have in place, are suffering. They are losing faith. They are being crushed by that taxation burden. I am talking about the 34, I think it is, tax increases and the goods and services tax which is not any more popular today, I can assure you, than it was when it was implemented. I predict that tax is gone.

What is worse, I am talking about the middle class and the crushing burden that they are suffering. If we look at the taxes that are being paid by the poor, proportionately they are paying a greater share. That is happening in spite of the fact that there are a number of Canadians who are earning extremely high remuneration and who are paying very little or no tax. In a number of cases there are companies that are doing very, very well but are paying very little or no tax.

Canadians are angry. They are tired. They feel that this system is not fair. When you see a cap on CAP, such as this program, you see the unfairness. It is simply exacerbated by tax measures such as those.

Some of you will recall the clawback on the seniors, the clawback on the family allowance programs and the fact that it will become increasingly serious over time. Initially a lot of people looked at it very quickly and said: "Well, what is the problem?" The problem is that over time more and more people will be clawed back at a much smaller salary. That will become increasingly serious. Those Canadians who took it lightly will realize in another 10 to 20 years that that was another Draconian measure.

The whole system is rife with unfair taxation measures. Let me give a couple of examples. Between people who are married and people who are living in a common law relationship, there is an advantage in being in a common law relationship from a taxation perspective. I do not want married people to suffer more and I certainly do not want the people who are living in common law to be penalized as are the married people. I think, however, if one has a legal relationship, and those are legal relationships, surely the taxation should not favour one or the other. Surely what is good for one ought to be good for the other.

Let me give another example. People who have receipted day care receive certain taxation benefits, while those who choose to stay at home, are able to stay at home or want to stay at home do not get the same kinds of benefits. People know that. People get angry when they see this kind of unfairness, this kind of injustice, and they want change.

[Translation]

Often, we hear that certain measures are taken or bills introduced in order to control the deficit and the debt. However, the deficit has been about \$30 billion for a number of years and this year it seems it will probably be more than that. I have here a document signed by the former Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, in which he