

Government Orders

cosmetic measures from this government. They want a government that is concerned with the good management of itself and this country's affairs, one that helps rather than harms their basic existence.

It is time we had a government that, as the Leader of the Opposition put it, promotes growth and does not hold it down.

What about the effects of economic growth in reducing government expenditure for such things as welfare, and at the same time restoring government revenues without higher taxes from businesses whose earnings are restored and by having Canadians go back to work?

Canadians will look beyond the empty words of the minister today in proposing this bill and see the failure of this government to meet its own projections, and the failure of this government to help Canadians live better and more fulfilling lives.

More than this bill, Canadians want an election to give themselves a new and a better government. The best way to get a fiscally responsible government but at the same time a caring and compassionate one is not through this bill. It is to have an election to get rid of this very bad government.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the bill which stands before us in the name of the Minister of Finance is a piece of proposed legislation which, if it had been properly put together and if the minister had listened to the unanimous report of the Standing Committee on Finance of this House, could have been a useful piece of legislation. It could have been a piece of legislation that in fact would respond to what many people across this country, many who talked to the finance committee during their hearings with respect to this bill, want to see.

Many Canadians across this country want to see a serious effort to deal with the deficit of this country. They want to see a serious effort to do that, and at the same time, to see that the expenditures which government makes and tax policy which government follows come together to provide us with a strategy to rebuild our economy, to re-establish jobs for Canadians, to get people back to work and to get them contributing taxes instead of accepting unemployment insurance. Thereby,

they want the government to see to it that we deal with the deficit.

For this bill to have achieved some of the purposes which I have talked about, purposes of controlling the ridiculous level of deficits which both Liberal and Conservative governments have created in our country and, second, to expand the number of jobs for Canadians which exist across this country from the very high unemployment levels which have been reached in this Conservative recession and the very high levels which were reached in the Liberal recession in the early 1980s, it would have been necessary for this government to listen, to listen first to the very finance committee of this House to which this bill was referred. Second, it would have been necessary for this government to listen to the many Canadians who testified before that finance committee.

I could take you, Mr. Speaker, and I could take people listening to this debate through many of the pieces of testimony which we heard in the finance committee. We heard, for instance, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It said to us: "Small business owners and Canadians generally have lost confidence in the government's ability to manage its own affairs, let alone manage the country".

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said: "As a first step in establishing some measure of credibility on the fiscal front, the government must impose upon itself a binding mechanism to ensure adherence to a sound expenditure control and deficit reduction plan".

I could quote from the Vancouver Board of Trade which spoke to us. Again, it stressed that even this small reduction in the deficit could be defeated if the assumptions of economic growth and interest rates turn out to be optimistic. "We think", said the Vancouver Board of Trade, "the assumptions err on the optimistic side".

I could take you through the testimony of the Business Council on National Issues, the Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Business group after business group said: "The issue is dealing with the deficit". Yet, what do we have in front of us? We have a piece of legislation which does not, despite what I am sure you will hear from members on the government side, deal with the deficit.