

Government Orders

amount of forethought has gone into the planning of the required adjustments needed to the finances of this country.

• (1320)

The budget sets us on the road. It is a complement to last year's budget which I believe will lead to a balanced budget in a few years time. It will cause investment, jobs and all the other fruits of economic growth and strength this country and the people of Canada deserve.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your splendid work in the chair. I listened attentively to my colleague and was surprised by his statement that Canadians across the country expressed confidence in this budget.

I am sure my colleague has not visited Quebec in a very long time, because he would have heard for himself what Quebecers think of the budget. It is easy, of course, to say that we will all have to make small sacrifices, but, it will be those already most disadvantaged, such as the seniors, who will be making most of them.

You know, in a region such as mine, the Saguenay—Lac Saint-Jean region, where unemployment is very high, young people are forced to go elsewhere just to try to find work—unsuccessfully. When we see this happening in pretty well all the regions of Canada and cuts being made to transfers to the provinces, we have to assume that the government does not care about educating young people.

My question concerns these transfers. Does my colleague realize that most of the budget cuts to transfer payments for health care and post-secondary education will be made in 1996, 1997 and 1998? This year's cuts, even though they will hurt, will be smaller than the ones in the years to come.

What is the government's strategy here? Instead of creating jobs, it is pursuing a strategy of showing Quebecers that federalism is effective, which is not true. It is trying to delay the effects of the budget until as long as possible after the referendum.

[English]

Mr. St. Denis: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Chicoutimi for his comments and question.

I visit Quebec often. When I am in Ottawa I live in Quebec. That should put his concern in that area to rest.

Mr. Fillion: Where?

Mr. St. Denis: Near Wakefield in the beautiful Gatineau hills.

The hon. member talked about the transfers and what the federal government is allegedly doing to impair the ability of the provinces to do their job. To spend \$63 million and counting on a referendum campaign is not exactly the wisest use of money. I submit to him that Quebecers would like the provincial government to focus its attention on economic issues and not so much on the sovereignty campaign. His message and his question should more fairly be put to his provincial counterparts but nonetheless, I will answer his question.

• (1325)

The strategy is quite transparent. Through the proposed CST, the Canadian social transfer, it is proposed through block funding to give the provinces more jurisdiction over health, post-secondary education and social services within a framework of some form of national standards to be agreed on with the provinces.

There is a strategy. It is transparent. It is obvious. I submit that the member for Chicoutimi should really discuss this with his provincial colleagues.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Madam Speaker, in rising to speak to Bill C-76, the budget implementation act, I want to make it clear from the outset that the Reform Party will oppose this bill as a whole.

This bill in some ways is like Bill C-68, the gun control legislation in that it is a bill with more than one part. Some of it is wholly unacceptable, but other parts with some minor changes would be acceptable to the Reform Party of Canada and to me.

Reform currently has a motion before the House to separate the gun control bill into two parts so that we could examine each main idea on its own merits. I wish we could do that with this bill as well. Bill C-76 is an omnibus bill dealing with more than one subject at once. There are public service issues. There are transportation and federal-provincial transfer issues and so on.

Since I am fortunate enough to be critic for renewal in the public service, we have examined the areas which deal with the public service. I have found some things I like and some things I do not like one bit. I am here to say what we like and what we do not like about the public service portion of this bill. I want to expose some very serious shortcomings indeed.

I want to go through the first 10 clauses of the bill. I will give my comments on each of the important clauses and then draw some conclusions from what we have found.

Section 39 of the Public Service Employment Act allows public servants who work in a minister's office for more than three years to bump other public servants, to be appointed in essence without competition. This is unfair in some cases. I am pleased to report that public servants declared surplus will not