

Government Orders

We said no. We have to look at the core government, what we should be doing as a government, what we have to build on, what we have to expand. What provinces and the private sector can do we should let them do. They will be more efficient in providing the service. We have to look at what we as a government need to do. There is a role for government in many areas.

We had a comprehensive review from the bottom up. We looked at the services government provides. We looked at what things we need for the future of the country and where we have to be strategic in strengthening our position as a government. Many things that may have been relevant in the past in today's economy, in this day and age, may not be relevant. We looked at boards. Many boards were eliminated. We realized we really did not need them.

This was a grassroots approach, from the bottom up, to evaluate all government services. We went to those people and asked where duplications were. Let us take the duplications out. Where can the municipalities provide the service better? In recreational harbours, in the area of fisheries, it does not make sense for us to manage those from Ottawa.

We are going to the local governments, to the provincial and the municipal governments. If they are not interested we will go to the private sector and say: "Do you want to manage these assets? You can do a much better job". It will create opportunities for small business people and opportunities to further develop that asset.

• (1615)

We have gone through a comprehensive review from the bottom up. At the same time we do not want to forget to restore the fundamentals and provide better core services to ensure that we improve on them.

We also want to look at the infrastructures that make us competitive. One of the reasons we are competitive is because we have strong infrastructures. We do not want to destroy those. We want to develop them. We want to make sure our telecommunication infrastructure is the best in the world. We cannot escape the global economy which is moving very quickly.

As a trading nation where one out of five jobs is created because of trading, we have to be competitive to ensure that the total infrastructure, whether it is telecommunications, transportation or the information highway, is competitive and able to compete with the rest of the economy.

That is why we want to strengthen these areas. The Minister of Industry has done a tremendous amount of work in strengthening our position in the area of information technology. One of the great opportunities that exists around the world is in the environmental industry. There is going to be a tremendous amount of opportunity there. Strategically as a country we must make sure we have the skills, the knowledge and the infrastructure to take advantage of the environmental industry.

The Prime Minister has taken a leadership role in the area of trade to ensure that Canadian businesses have the opportunity to take advantage of all the new opportunities that exist in the global economy by going to different countries. At the same time, we need to develop a trade infrastructure so that we develop an information system which tells our small and medium size businesses that there are certain opportunities that exist in all the different sectors in which we compete.

In meeting with people from many other countries, they have told us that Canadian technology is among the best in the world and that we can compete with anybody out there. However, we need to know the opportunities. We need to ensure that we build a system of information so that right at a computer people will be able to access all the tenders that are coming up and all the opportunities that exist in the rest of the world. We need to develop our trade infrastructure so that we give those opportunities to small and medium sized businesses.

What we have done in this government is fulfilled the promises we made to Canadians by ensuring that we meet our deficit targets and that we have a vision for this country to bring the deficit to zero and to build a country where small and medium sized businesses will take the opportunities that exist in the global economy. That is the way we are going.

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address some of the recommendations that were made in the report from the finance committee as a result of the prebudget hearings.

I want to come at this from the point of view of regular, average, everyday people who may not know a lot about economics but know a lot about what kind of country they want to live in.

It is my view that the real reason for governments, institutions, laws and all the institutions is for the people. What that says to me is that these institutions and the economy and all of those types of things need to be in alignment with the values of the people. Therefore, when we go about designing these institutions, budgets or laws, we need to know what the values of the people are.