

The Budget

What better way to thank that region and its residents for their support than to cut over 285 jobs in the military sector?

In addition to holding many surprises for the years following the referendum, the 1995 budget does not deal with the real issue. It does not deal with unemployment.

The Liberal government refuses to use the surplus in the UI fund to implement concrete job-creating initiatives. The government wants to reduce the deficit, but it does not resort to concrete measures and prefers to transfer the problem to the provinces.

• (1105)

I realize once again that, with its budget, the Liberal government is showing all Quebecers that the federal system does not work and that it would be much wiser on our part to get rid of it.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for the hon. member for Chicoutimi. He referred at length to the budget and to the connection he sees with the forthcoming referendum in Quebec.

Since he brought this up, I wonder whether the hon. member for Chicoutimi is in favour, as his leader seems to be, of changing the question for the referendum. The issue is relevant to this debate on the Budget, since he mentioned it himself. Furthermore, it creates a climate of uncertainty, as Premier Parizeau clearly admitted in his various speeches and statements on Parti Québécois policy.

Considering the impact of this issue on the economy of the country and on the budgetary process, I would like to know whether the hon. member for Chicoutimi personally favours changing the question, or whether he would agree that this is a lot of window dressing, in other words, an attempt to manipulate the electorate. The option has not changed. It is still the same. The option is independence or federalism, and as far as I know that has not changed; but as far as change in the referendum question is concerned, we can expect, or at least we have the impression that there is some trickery afoot. I would be interested to hear the hon. member's position on this matter.

Mr. Fillion: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am not so sure the question as such has a direct connection with the budget. However, I will respond to the issue raised by the hon. member for Sherbrooke and tell him that, for the time being, everything is on the table.

If the hon. member for Sherbrooke had any suggestions for the Government of Quebec as to the form and substance of the question to be asked in the referendum, he could have participated in a democratic exercise in which the National Assembly of Quebec gave all residents a chance to be heard. He failed to participate in this exercise which would have given him a chance to explain his position before the public.

I could also mention the outcome of the election in Brome—Missisquoi. I think voters made it quite clear to the hon. member for Sherbrooke that what he represented was not what they wanted. His party came in fourth or fifth.

My position is that, with our natural resources, with our culture and with everything we have developed in Quebec in recent years, the people are ready for this question, and they are ready to say yes.

[English]

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, sometimes I wonder how much longer we will have to endure this same tiresome line from the Bloc, constantly referring everything that happens in this House to the specifics of how it will affect Quebec. Never mind the country, just Quebec. Frankly, it drives me nuts.

He mentioned the milk subsidies and the 30 per cent cut over two years. He said the west received a much better deal because it received restitution for the cut of the Crow benefit. I wonder if he realizes or if he chooses to ignore that the cut to the Crow benefit was 100 per cent and immediate. He is talking about a 30 per cent cut over two years.

He also states quite correctly that 50 per cent of fluid milk production comes from Quebec. I wonder what he thinks will happen to all that subsidized milk production if he gets his dream of independence and the Canadian market is cut off, as it naturally would be—

The Deputy Speaker: I think the question is clear.

• (1110)

[Translation]

Mr. Fillion: Mr. Speaker, first, I must say that Quebec has been trying for over 100 years. Quebecers delegated members of Parliament to this House to defend their ideas.

We realized, at the end of debates, that our very simple questions were getting very little response. Whether it is agriculture, rail transportation or natural resource development, Quebec has always had to fight harder to achieve its goals. Today, with what we are offering Quebecers—and rest assured that we will be able to sell our dairy products, regardless, because they are quality products—

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. Debate resumes with the hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were promised a tough budget focused on renewal. Tough, it was for sure. But it was tough for the disadvantaged, once again, with social programs being blithely cut directly and indirectly. As for the renewal part of it, it did not quite make it. There was