

Government Orders

Even if everything goes their way, they will still have a \$25 billion deficit which is unacceptably high. The finance minister and the Liberals do not get it. The Minister of Human Resources Development seems to think the role of government is to continually come up with new and exciting forms of taxation. The Minister of Finance hesitated to rule out the Tobin tax or any other new taxes. This is the best way to bankrupt a country. The government simply cannot solve the nation's financial mess by taking more out of the economy through taxation.

No nation has ever spent and borrowed its way to prosperity. Quite the opposite is true. Many great nations and empires have fallen because of the growth of government and taxation. Perhaps the most prominent among them is the Roman Empire. When faced with the oncoming barbarian hordes, many of the outlying states decided to throw their lot in with the barbarians, saying: "Better the barbarians we do not know than the taxes we do know".

Not only some in Quebec but some folks in the western provinces are using the huge debt and growing taxation as a platform for seceding from the federation. For the sake of national unity we need to eliminate the deficit quickly.

As well, the only way the Liberals will ever be in a position to bring taxes down is to completely eliminate the deficit. We know they will not do it by 1996-97. If the Liberals have a plan to do it after that, they will not share it with Canadians. This is bad news for the Deputy Prime Minister. She made quite a performance out of announcing that she would resign if the GST were not gone within a year. They cannot bring down taxes while running a deficit, so I suppose her career is over. That is a shame. I am sure the House will miss her shrill voice and her partisan, illogical grandstanding. She has looked after herself, however, with a generous two tiered MP pension plan.

As well as being a bad budget for the Liberal Party it is also a very bad budget for Canada. That is the important matter I want to deal with this morning. Apart from the negative impact of continued debt and taxation, the budget creates some inequities in the country.

The cuts made by the government have a very lopsided impact. For instance, the agricultural industry in western Canada is hit harder than any other industry. The loss of the Crow benefit will have obvious long term effects on the industry. The gasoline tax will hit farmers particularly hard. Farming is a very fuel intensive industry and travel is a necessity in rural areas. The government has increased the input costs for farmers, increased the cost of getting the product to market and offered no hope of tax reduction in the future.

• (1130)

Farmers realize many of these things are necessary in order to save the country from financial collapse. What angers farmers is

that so many others got off so easily in the budget. If everyone had been hit as hard as agriculture, the budget would have been balanced. We would have had something to show for our effort.

For years farmers have been saying they do not mind doing their share and losing the rail subsidy if other subsidized agencies do the same. Farmers have been hit with a 30 per cent loss to their safety net programs and the entire loss of their transportation subsidy in the west.

At the same time the CBC only gets kicked with a 4 per cent reduction in its subsidy. Does the government feel that a 4 per cent cut to the CBC is comparable to a 100 per cent cut to grain transportation?

The removal of the Crow subsidy appears to have been a last minute decision. It appears pressure was put on the minister of agriculture to find more savings and so he axed the Crow without thinking through and planning for the implications. The minister of agriculture calls it a buy out, but the value of the WGTA is much higher. Some suggest it is more like \$7 billion rather than \$1.6 billion. He should have more accurately called a Crow buy off at fire sale prices because the federal purse has been mismanaged for so many years by Liberal and Conservative finance ministers they simply do not have the money for a real buy out.

For years the Reform Party has been calling for a long term plan for moving the agriculture industry toward a market system. The government has had a year and a half in office to plan for this transition but it has done nothing.

The government waited until the last moment and then sprung this crow buy off on farmers with almost no warning and no plan for implementation. To date the minister of agriculture has not been clear on who the buy out money is to be paid to, how the amount will be calculated, what the tax implications of the pay out will be for farmers or any of the other dozens of questions that my constituents and farmers across the west are asking.

I am starting to believe the minister's offices cannot answer these questions because it has not even thought through many of these problems yet. The elimination of the Crow benefit has been poorly designed, very ad hoc and in a desperate manner. The minister of agriculture campaigned on the red book promises to develop a long term plan for agriculture.

I want to take a few minutes to look at what the Liberal red book says and what the minister of agriculture has been saying to Canadians. In the red book the Liberal government promised to develop an overall policy for the agri-food sector which will build upon three component strategies: developing new domestic and international markets for Canadian food products; reducing input costs to make farming more viable; introducing a new whole farm income stabilization program that assists farm families to secure their long term future.