

• (1705)

The constituents of Wetaskiwin can expect availability, accountability and austerity from me. What I plan to deliver is the same kind of representation they may have received from my dad.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Wetaskiwin on his introductory speech to the House.

Because we are only an hour away from having to make a decision on his party's amendment to the speech from the throne I wonder if he would be so kind as to respond to some questions I have concerning the proposal to put a cap on expenditures.

In spite of the fact that this House in the last Parliament passed such a law introduced by the then Minister of Finance, Don Mazankowski, member for Vegreville, we had the largest deficit overrun that has ever occurred in this country. I am wondering why he or his party think that a repeat of that absolutely useless kind of legal requirement from this House, that absolutely ineffective law and direction, is going to work this time.

Mr. Johnston: Certainly there is no chance of it ever working unless we place a spending cap on the budget, live by it and plan to honour it.

To ignore the problem certainly is not going to be the answer either so let us all recognize that this is a problem, but not a revenue problem. My party believes very strongly that we do not have a revenue problem. We have a spending problem. That is the way you would run your business. That is the way I would run my business. If I find that the income does not balance the expenditures the first thing I have to do is look at my expenditure side of the ledger.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Laurentides has two and a half minutes. Does the hon. member wish to ask a question or make a comment?

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment. This being the first time I have the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your election.

As for expenditures—

The Deputy Speaker: It seems that you are not interested in asking the member for Wetaskiwin a question, but rather that you would like to resume debate. Is that right?

Mrs. Guay: I have no question but rather a comment.

The Deputy Speaker: Then I think that according to the understanding between the parties, the member for Fraser Valley West has the floor now.

Mrs. Guay: Fine.

The Address

The Deputy Speaker: If there is no question, then, I will give the floor to the hon. member for Fraser Valley West.

[English]

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to offer my sincere congratulations to you and to all members of the House of Commons on their election to this 35th Parliament.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to all the people in Langley, Aldergrove and Matsqui, British Columbia for expressing their confidence in me by sending me here to represent them.

This is the time when the eyes of Canada are on the new government so I think it only fitting that I speak today about vision.

Historians I am sure will look back on October 25, 1993 as a landmark in Canadian elections. Canadians as never before spoke out in a loud clear voice for the need to change. The old way of doing things is just not good enough any more.

Some would diminish the importance of the result by labelling it merely a protest vote. What, I ask, is insignificant about a protest vote. The people of this country were protesting the way government conducts business and it is up to us to show there is a better way.

We have for two decades witnessed federal governments living beyond their means and it is time to stop and hold all politicians accountable. But rather than look back in anger we prefer to look forward with hope.

• (1710)

The throne speech yesterday provided a glimpse of optimism, something rare in these uncertain economic times. We have heard talk of a new spirit of openness and co-operation between political parties, an idea I would like to applaud. However we heard the same message in the speech from the throne in 1984. It lasted about two weeks. Let us hope it lasts longer this time.

What I wish to emphasize in the strongest possible terms is that if there is no true commitment to open the books of government to the intense scrutiny they need, then all of this talk of co-operation and a new way of running government will be just another echo bouncing down these historic halls.

All MPs should be involved in the detailed, critical analysis of government spending. If the government makes good on the pledge to give more power to MPs in its committees this could be a positive change.

I am also encouraged to see the government has adopted some, though not enough, of our recommendations with respect to perks for members of Parliament. However, since the government has already made its decision I am at a loss as to why a