

Government Orders

Comprehensive diversification of our regional economy is a long term goal which is progressing.

I am encouraged that this budget, while reducing or eliminating subsidies, is keeping business support programs in place. Small business loans, export and marketplace services and technology support all remain a part of the federal mandate. We are also optimistic about the future of tourism initiatives that have become a federal priority.

The relationship between small business and the banking sector has been a longstanding concern in my riding. When I was in opposition it was something we talked about on numerous occasions, that small business is still not getting a fair shake from the financial institutions in the country.

In the budget the access to capital for the reasonable ventures essential to the economic growth in my region is again going to be a priority of the finance minister. I am still hopeful that sooner or later the banks in this country will realize that without them we cannot get this economy rolling to the extent we believe it can.

Recent increases in the Small Business Loans Act are a positive sign. A region such as northwestern Ontario is dictated by unique circumstances. I also feel the privatization of crown corporations will be received well in this House and in the riding I represent.

I chaired a government task force to study the future of the Canadian National Railway. The commercialization of CN is one of the recommendations in our final report. This action and other commercializations such as Petro-Canada has great potential for the private sector. It puts business in the hands of business people and leaves government with the task of regulating, not operating.

The fearmongering on the issue of social programs is something I want touch on a little. The issue of Canada social transfers does not hold much water in my riding. If we changed the system my constituents would applaud that simply because they are not satisfied with the current structure of social programs as they exist today.

Like many members of the House, I have conducted a survey on social security. The overwhelming response was that social policy must change. This budget sets social policy changes in motion and I applaud that. Once again, the government has not pressed the panic button.

The other side tends to press the panic button to make people concerned about the fact that we are not moving quickly enough. Those who have been here around here a little longer will realize that if we take our time and put the right programs in place those will be the programs that will survive the test of time and they

are the kinds of programs that built this country and made it the great place we live in.

If we are to change our system we have to make sure it is a change for the better and not for the worse.

• (1625)

This budget makes it clear that this party is responsible for universal social programs in Canada. It will be this party that brings social policy into the 21st century. Of course the only way we will do that is to ensure we can afford it and this budget does just that.

This is a responsible budget. We are attacking the deficit but we are planning our attack without undue casualties. The social fabric of our nation will survive. We are setting a responsible pace of deficit reduction to preserve economic growth and stability.

Mr. Ted White (North Vancouver, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear the hon. member saying his constituents have been very pleased with the budget, especially when the Prime Minister and a number of other Liberal MPs have been saying how this is not a budget they wanted to bring in, that it is an anti-Liberal budget.

I wonder if this actually means the people in central and eastern Canada voted Liberal because they had no other choice and that they actually do not want traditional Liberal budgets or traditional Liberal policies. Polls taken on things like justice and the budget show that Canadians actually want Reform style policies and budgets.

I ask the hon. member whether the fact that he is getting compliments about the budget actually means people do not support Liberal policies.

Mr. Nault: Mr. Speaker, as I have on numerous occasions in this place, let me make very clear to my friend across the way that I do not come from central Canada. I come from western Canada. I happen to be the member of Parliament for Kenora—Rainy River, which is in a vast riding in northern Ontario. It is on central time and is so close to Winnipeg we have very western ideas. The riding has been voting Liberal long before I was alive and, yes, there was a Reform candidate who ran in my riding. He was lucky to get his deposit back, the lucky soul that he was.

I can assure this House that my riding, being of very western flavour, believing very strongly in Canada's social programs and fabric, would not have been voting Liberal since the turn of the century if it did not believe in Liberal principles.

If this budget, as is being suggested by the member, were not a Liberal budget I would have heard about it first and foremost in my riding because my riding, as I said, only voted one other way in its history and that was when it lost its way in 1984 when everybody was foolish enough to vote Tory and it went with the