

The Budget—Miss Grey

The time has come for real fiscal responsibility from this Government. There is discontent in the Tory ranks. The Hon. Member for Portage—Interlake (Mr. Holtmann) said he will stake his career on stopping base closures. The Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia (Mr. Wilson) is unhappy about transportation provisions. The Hon. Member for Edmonton—Strathcona (Mr. Thorkelson) said he will not support cuts to VIA Rail. The Hon. Member for Calgary Northeast (Mr. Kindy) has the audacity to suggest that his voice as an elected representative should matter. So it should. It seems even Alberta Tories will find it next to impossible to defend this Budget to their constituents.

Canadians are increasingly nervous about the short-term, near-sighted policies of this Government. During the election the deficit, they claimed, was under control. I went to many forums. I ran, of course, in the election. I went to nine all-candidates forums. I turned around and did four more in the by-election. In the general election, in the nine forums that I attended, I wanted to talk about the deficit because I felt it was important and Canadians felt it was important.

The Free Trade Agreement absolutely, overwhelmingly took precedence. That is all we heard, unfortunately. We heard nothing about the deficit. Now I wonder, was it under control? We know it is not under control and it was not then.

Now they talk of urgent crisis but show little urgent action. The longer we wait, the deeper the cuts will have to be. The public is tired of the crisis management approach. For example, why is the Government building \$1 billion CBC building in the overheated economy of downtown Toronto, while cutting the budget for CBC's programming? Does this sound like reasonable planning?

An Hon. Member: Not at all.

Miss Grey (Beaver River): Canadians, I believe, are ready to bite the bullet. Constituents expected cuts and they can live with them. But it is only fair that every sector should be affected. As leaders of this country, we should be serving as role models. Think of the message it would send to Canadians if we were willing to take cuts in expenditures. If cuts were absolutely consistent, then

no Canadian could point a finger at anyone else and cry "unfair". That would speak louder than anything else.

I have watched in frustration, and indeed just watched it a few moments ago, the Government and the Opposition blaming each other over and over again for who is to blame about this. Canadians are concerned about answers to the crisis, not merely attaching blame. As far as they are concerned, it does not matter who is to blame. They want us to get out of this situation. Let us get on with the salvaging operation. Time is running out. Taxes are up. Spending is up. Interest rates are up. The deficit is up. Mr. Speaker, the gig is up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to give the NDP the last six or seven minutes here before we call in the Members. I would like to forego the questions and comments on this particular speaker.

Mr. Volpe: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence (Mr. Volpe) can have his question and comment. I will allow him a short question and comment, and Winnipeg—North Centre (Mr. Walker) also. The Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Volpe: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am very pleased to have listened to the Hon. Member give her address but I want to clarify the record. In fact, while she may not have seen as many members of the Opposition here to listen to the second presentation of a budget which was flawed, both in content and in process, and while she indicated that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) is a victim of circumstances, we would have argued that he would have been a victim of his own ineptitude and that his credibility did not merit the attention that he wanted for a budget that was rehashed.

But there was somebody present here for the opposition Parties. Both opposition Parties were represented ably by my colleague to my left from Winnipeg North Centre, who saw very, very clearly that our views would be there, that he would listen on our behalf to reinforce what we had already known and what we were already convinced of. I dare say to the Hon. Member that we have seen nothing to the contrary so far. In fact, all of our suspicions regarding the Budget, its content and its perpetration of inequity were justified and it justified our actions on that evening.