

Supply

We have to understand where we are going in this country. We do not have an unlimited pocket-book nor an unlimited ability to pay bills. Those in the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party who continue to advocate new measures, new programs and new expenditure patterns have to understand what the coffee smells like.

Bob Rae said that we have to smell the coffee because it is not as easy as all that. We have to prioritize our payments and until we do we will not be able to really get at some of the problems of government.

We have been through a very serious restructuring in the business world and we are still going through it. Businesses are modernizing. They are changing the way they do things. Banks are changing the way they process paper.

The other day the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce decided that it could somehow eliminate another 300 of its bill collectors and cut down the number of offices it had across Canada. Why? I could do so as a result of new technical equipment, fast transmission of data, the movement of what was once upon a time paper by non-paper methods and all that type of transaction technology that is now available.

What we have to do in government is the same thing. We are doing it. We are closing offices of employment and immigration by consolidating their work in various places across the country. We are having more of it done by mail and so on. All these things take time but they have to be done.

It is essential that we again prioritize the kinds of things the Government of Canada is involved in. Do we really need the Government of Canada in the housing field? After all, constitutionally Canada cannot rezone land, cannot control rents, cannot control building standards and cannot even file a subdivision. Should Canada really be involved in housing? The answer probably is no. We should probably phase out that activity.

Should Canada be involved in forestry? Most of the forests of this country are on provincial Crown lands. They are not federal Crown lands, they are provincial Crown lands. While we have forests on Indian reserve land, parks and so on, the bulk of the forests in this country are on provincial Crown lands. Is forestry not really a provincial responsibility? Should we have a

minister of forests? Perhaps not. Perhaps we will have to make that decision.

These are the kind of calls we must make. We cannot continue to supply all the government that we presently supply because we cannot afford to supply it. We have made some progress. The budget lays out the situation as is. It is a stand pat budget. It does not get at solving the problems that I have talked about today but it does leave it available for the next government to do that.

• (1540)

It does not tie the hands of another government. The minister could have come here and made all sorts of legislative-type proposals, but we in this House all know that those legislative proposals could never be passed in the time available for this House before the next general election.

We would have a budget that would attempt to tie a future government. Surely a future government at this stage of the House now need not be tied. This budget does not tie a future government. It does not make any great changes in legislated programs or deal with the total restructuring of government. That will be for another prime minister who will probably be from this side because there is nobody on that side competent to run the country. In any event it will be another government and it will move further in the restructuring of our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I always had the impression that to govern meant making decisions and setting priorities as soon as one took over the reins of power. It is the very essence of the Canadian political system.

When a member of the present government tells us, after nine years in power, that there are other things to consider and that no decisions can be made today, that is totally at odds with what Canadians expect from their government.

[*English*]

I would just like to remind my colleague opposite that government is all those things he said it is, but because it has governed for nine years it must assume full responsibility for the outcome of decisions made, decisions deferred or lack of courage in making decisions that he