

*Government Orders*

The next time she asks a question, I ask her to tell us where she was going to make the cuts to eliminate the deficit in three years. She would not have only frozen the increments. She would have slashed the wages of these people and she knows it. She would face much tougher criticism then.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I have a short comment to make. The member opposite knows well where the Reform Party would make its cuts because they were well publicized.

Would the minister be prepared to amend the bill so that the increments were paid if the Reform Party showed him how to save \$2 for every \$1 it costs without causing any job loss?

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party likes to talk about its steps to reduction plan. As I read the figures, it announced an \$18 billion reduction in government expenditures and said that \$18 billion would bring the deficit to zero in three years.

The deficit we now know is something like \$45 billion or \$47 billion. Whatever it is this year it is a very substantial figure, and \$18 billion off that takes it down to about \$28 billion. Where would the other \$28 billion come from? That figure was a fraud. The whole paper put forward by the Reform Party during the election was a complete fraud. I invite hon. members to tell us the truth. Where was the \$45 billion coming from? That is what the deficit is. We have never heard that figure from anybody in the Reform Party and we never will.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are about three minutes left to be divided between the two members.

**Mr. Gouk:** Mr. Speaker, it will not even take me that long to expose the hoax of the question he posed.

The parliamentary secretary knows well that much of the reduction was coming through a growth in the economic situation in the country. Using a figure lower than the one proposed by the finance minister at that time, using a figure that was compatible with the one that the Liberal government is using right now, it was based on a real deficit, not one that was propped with non-recurring factors added to the budget to make it look worse than it really was.

**Mr. Milliken:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can argue that if he wishes. I will go back to Mr. Mazankowski's budget deficit figure last year which I think was \$35 billion, if I am not mistaken. If the hon. member subtracts \$18 billion from \$35 billion, my arithmetic takes it down to about \$17 billion. Where were the other \$17 billion in cuts? The question is the same. It is only a matter of the amount. However \$17 billion is \$17 billion. Maybe it should have been \$25 billion, I will not argue that. I still ask: Where are the other \$17 billion in cuts?

The Reform Party had no idea where those cuts would come from. It still has no idea where those cuts would come from. We will never hear from them as to where those cuts would come from because I predict that when the time comes for the Reform Party to tell us those figures it will be a dead duck.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate. I should perhaps tell the hon. member for Lévis we have about ten minutes of debate left.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis):** Mr. Speaker, I will do my best in ten minutes.

Bill C-17, an Act to implement certain provisions of the budget, reveals this government's true identity. Liberal government members succeeded in getting elected by denouncing the unfair policies of the Conservative government which widened the gap between rich and poor, as well as the gap between anglophones and francophones. A study released this week showed this to be the case everywhere, except in Quebec.

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However, once again we see today how the public's hopes for justice, dignity and equity have been blithely crushed by politicians who, when in opposition, denounced others for doing exactly what they are now guilty of.

Once again, the government is attacking the least fortunate in society. A recent analysis carried out by three experts from the economics department at the University of Quebec at Montreal showed that 60 per cent of the cuts to the federal deficit announced in this budget will be borne by Canada's unemployed. This is totally unfair since the government will be forcing the least fortunate to bear a bigger share of the burden of putting the nation's finances in order.

Lowering the number of weeks of benefit entitlement while at the same time increasing the number of weeks of work needed for benefit entitlement does nothing to address the problem of those who defraud or take advantage of the system. What this measure does above all is attack the vast majority of unemployed workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and who must now face increasingly harsh economic conditions.

This unravelling of the social safety net on which workers depend will also affect regions and provinces already hard hit by the recession. By taking this action, the Minister of Finance is getting the provinces to foot the bill by forcing the unemployed onto social assistance sooner than necessary.

According to the figures provided by the Department of Human Resources, the federal cutbacks mean that the Government of Quebec will have to spend an additional \$65 million to