

Government Orders

under the Liberal government. This means we were borrowing to pay the groceries.

Someone said once: When I look at myself, I feel bad, but when I look at others, I feel better. I think those words are particularly apt today. What do we have now? In 1993 we have a deficit of \$34.5 billion. In 1993 the average increase in government spending was reduced from 15 per cent to 4 per cent. The deficit as a percentage of GDP was reduced from 8 per cent under the Liberals to 5.2 per cent. In 1980 interest rates had soared to 22 per cent and in 1993 they have dropped to 6 per cent and 7 per cent.

In 1980, inflation was running at 12 per cent, while in 1993 it is down to about 2 per cent. We went from an operating deficit of \$16 billion to a surplus of \$6.5 billion. Not only do we not borrow a thing to feed ourselves but we produce a \$6.5 billion surplus which allows us to absorb in part the cost of servicing the debt.

• (1540)

Our exports to the United States have increased thanks to our policies to a record \$122.3 billion, a 13.5 per cent increase since 1991. This is important as we know that on an annual basis, for every additional \$100,000 worth of products sold abroad, a new job is created. I could go on like this forever, but I only wanted to show very clearly that we are on the right track.

Basically, why can we now say we see the light at the end of the tunnel? Because the government faced up to its responsibilities, according to the mandate it received from the people and in spite of the vicious opposition from the New Democrats and the Liberals, and introduced legislation similar to Bill C-113 in order to bring public spending under control and to reduce it.

This has demonstrated to the world that Canada is still able to make the necessary decisions to put its finances in order and to live within its means.

The decisions we took had only one objective: to remedy an atrocious situation which in the long run would have jeopardized the future of this country, a situation which we inherited from the Trudeau-Chrétien era. But during all these years, during each and every debate we have had in this House on legislation aimed at controlling public spending, one fact has become very obvious, the disinformation coming from the opposition.

How many gloom and doom predictions, groundless exaggerations and vicious accusations are at the basis of the disinformation campaign carried on by the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois members? It must be said that these people have never hesitated to throw their support behind unions and pressure groups and to back their outrageous statements.

The debate on Bill C-113 is just another powerful example of that, as was the one on Bill C-21, drug patents, free trade between Canada and the United States and so many other instances. But in the specific case of Bill C-113, we heard a wide range of questionable statements of which the intellectual honesty was very doubtful.

What about the action of the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec, the FTQ? First, it caught the attention of the population by organizing a demonstration in the offices of Quebec members and even vandalizing some of them. However, later on it did not even appear before the legislative committee to present its arguments after having confirmed it would do so. No excuses. No explanations. The federation simply did not come.

It is very easy to make all kinds of idle statements during public demonstrations but when it is time to testify before a House committee, to state one's case before a legislative committee, to ship out without notifying anyone, without giving any explanation or excuse. I find such an attitude rather reprehensible. During all that time and since then, these people have instigated demonstrations once again using misinformation. Who in this House would agree with such totally unacceptable actions? The member for Timmins—Chapleau.

In the bill it is said that we will freeze UI benefits by decreasing the rate from 60 to 57 per cent for a two-year period. In the conclusion of the brief it presented to the legislative committee, why did the Confederation of National Trade Unions omit to mention that this measure will apply for a two-year period? Did it forget or was it deliberate? The CNTU also stated in the same document, and I quote:

• (1545)

Bill C-113 retains the absolute disqualification from benefits for people who have quit their jobs or been fired.