

Government Orders

The change the Minister of Finance talked about was not so much in terms of dollars, although they will play a role, but more in the philosophy of government. The minister asked what role the government should play in the lives of the people of the country and the answer he received was less.

Paternalistic government seems to becoming a thing of the past with the government once again becoming a tool instead of a solution. That is no bad thing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member's speech. He started off by saying that one of the objectives of this budget was to put the government's fiscal house in order, in a way that is fair and equitable.

I wonder what he means by fair. Does he realize who is going to bear the brunt of all these budget cuts? The provinces, which will be stuck with billions of dollars they will have to raise themselves.

• (1305)

Young people will be affected by cuts in a number of employment programs and in the money required for post-secondary education. Cuts will also affect the public service, but only the base, not the higher-ups in their ivory towers, with the biggest paychecks and the biggest expense accounts. This morning we heard about the trips these officials make. Not the people who work at the bottom but those who are up there in their ivory towers in each department, the generals who are chauffeured around in their limos. They are not affected by the budget.

I am also thinking of farmers. The hon. member said a few words about them in his speech. Yes, farmers will be affected by cuts to employment and other programs.

I am also thinking of the unemployed. This has almost become a dirty word to members opposite, because to them, the unemployed are just a lazy bunch of beer drinkers. Since last week, they are cheaters as well, and an army of public servants has been recruited to try and recover negligible amounts, while we do not even bother to recover \$6.6 billion in taxes outstanding. Most of this amount is owed by large corporations.

When the hon. member talks about everything being fair and equitable, I wonder at whose expense. What is so equitable about it, if everybody can use family trusts and tax loopholes to shelter their money?

Not once did the hon. member mention job creation. What job creation programs has this budget proposed, especially for young people?

[*English*]

Mr. McGuire: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

As we read the newspapers over this past month and a half we saw provincial government after provincial government, New Brunswick, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and probably tomorrow Prince Edward Island, coming in with balanced budgets.

The hon. member says we are offloading to the provinces. Is it fair for the provinces to expect the federal government to subsidize the provincial balanced budgets and not address our own budget problems? If he answered that honestly he would say no. We have a major budget problem, not only an accumulated debt but in our annual deficits.

We see provinces balancing their budgets. We know most of the provinces receive transfer payments of one sort or another. They are looking very good in front of their people and getting all kinds of support and applause for doing so. A lot of the money to those provincial governments is coming from the federal government.

I do not think any fair minded provincial premier would say we should not address our budget deficits at all; that we should continue sending money to the provinces and to individuals that we do not have and have to borrow year after year.

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to follow my colleague, the member for Egmont, in participating in the debate on our most recent federal budget, a budget which speaks to a whole new attitude toward governance, a new attitude by the people of Canada because they see good leadership.

• (1310)

After many years, finally again they are seeing good leadership in their government; the kind of leadership that breeds confidence. Even though Canadians are having to accept a share in the national effort to reduce our annual deficit and ultimately the debt, they recognize it is a small price for putting the country back on track.

Some of our critics take issue with jobs and say we have not addressed that. Fundamentally the budget is about jobs. We cannot properly take our place on the world stage if our financial house is not in order.

When our finance minister was faced with the challenge of creating a budget, he had to deal with the view of our nation from outside and from within its borders. The view from outside