

The Budget

I might add, however, that I thought it was a bit mean on his part to argue that I only quoted English newspapers from Manitoba. I repeat that none in French were published this morning.

When I went through the press clippings, I quoted some in French which praised the government for the budget. I took what I could find. I will find some more and I will pass them on to you, so you can read them and perhaps change your opinion.

• (1320)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member for St. Boniface, but I want to make sure that all comments are made through the Chair, and that hon. members do not use “you”, or “vous” in French. Hon. members must address the Chair.

Mr. Duhamel: As for the three specific questions on cuts in the west versus those in the east, you know, Mr. Speaker, the people from the west—Mr. Speaker, I thank you for having reminded me to address my comments to the Chair because it is my intention to do so.

That is the problem with Bloc members. They are like that sometimes. It is sad because there are people, men and women, who are very broad-minded when they want to— Here is what Westerners are saying: We had a 100 per cent cut, while in the east they suffered a cut of only 30 per cent.

This is how people think. One member said that they would receive compensation. Of course, but if their subsidies are totally eliminated, perhaps it is only right for them to be compensated.

Mr. Speaker, they do not want to consider this: compensation for having lost 100 per cent of their subsidies. But a 30 per cent reduction is not fair. Members should think about it.

As for family trusts, we are the first government to act on the issue.

Mr. Bellehumeur: Are you?

Mr. Duhamel: Patience. You see, Mr. Speaker, they want us to do everything today, even when they are not ready. In fact, this government will ensure that it is done, but without being unreasonable. When we decided to cut transfers, we did not say right now, as of midnight tonight. We are giving people time to adjust to the change. It is the sensible way to go about it. We did not smash everything at once with the government's big hammer. We are kind. We are giving them time to adjust.

As far as banks are concerned, \$100 million is a lot more than what I have presently in my bank account. It might be a significant percentage of their revenues. Could it be higher? Of course, it could. What will the impact be? If we were to increase it a lot more, will it have a negative impact on job creation? The

problem is that they refuse to look at all the other sides of the medal. They only look at one. They keep on referring to something people dislike, such as the banks' huge profits, and they try to exploit it. I do not find this very honest on their part.

[English]

Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. Boniface read from a number of newspaper articles and quoted a variety of sources that commended somewhat the budget but not in a conclusive way. It was said that it is a good first step but Canada faces challenges.

One of the major challenges that Canada and individual citizens face is the fact that the government, in its first period of administration, by 1996–97 will have placed in the laps of Canadians another \$100 billion in debt without any plan, without any indication that there is finality or an appointed time at which that debt will stop accumulating and growing. There is not one mention or indication at all to Canadians that it is going to stop.

Does the hon. member after all of his fine pronouncements have the answer to the question when the deficits will stop accumulating on the debt? Then Canadians will know the finite sum of our debt, at which point we will have to deal with it.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question. First, I am delighted that my colleague acknowledges there have been a number of newspaper articles—I remind myself I am not supposed to use those as props—that have seen the budget rather favourably. They said not only is it a good first step but that it is going in the right direction and that we are going to get there.

There is supposedly no plan. That is not accurate. I know my colleague is a honourable person and he is not trying to suggest anything Machiavellian. There is plan. We have indicated in the red book that 3 per cent of GDP was our objective. Once we have attained that then we are going to eliminate the deficit and start attacking the debt. My colleague knows that.

• (1325)

Mr. Speaker, you know that this other Mr. Speaker is aware of that which I speak. There is a plan. It is as plain as one's nose on one's face, and particularly plain when I talk of myself in that way. There is a plan. We will reach that objective. Subsequent to reaching that objective we will eliminate the deficit, attack the debt, and the country will be on a sound footing.

[Translation]

Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a brief comment. This budget is a little bit like venom to which sugar has been added to make it easier to swallow. Why is it that measures dealing with family trusts have been delayed until 1999, and that nothing is said about measures aimed at senior citizens?