

Government Orders

United States and in Canada. Some 7,500 people went on cruises ending in Quebec City this year compared to 4,300 last year. Is this not an exciting new niche for a country like ours? We could at the same time develop our merchant marine and give work to our shipyards such as MIL Davie, in Lauzon, which are world-renowned in their field.

I am making these constructive suggestions to the House because they were ignored in the budget speech.

Let us now look at duplication. Is it not time that agencies, departments and other government bodies be carefully reviewed to determine if they really offer an essential service? Is it not time for the various government levels to communicate with each other and put an end to duplication? Our party has been bringing tax shelters to the attention of this government for some time now, but they did not have the courage to abolish the real tax shelters of the rich, family trusts, for example. They prefer to postpone such decisions and let a committee study the question. However, the government did not ask a committee to examine the question when it decided to cut the tax credit for those 65 and over. They certainly know how to make decisions when attacking the have-nots! They knew very well how to go about it when they decided to cut UI benefits through bill C-17.

Canadians need reassurance. A country's economy grows out of its resources and Canada's most important resource is its population. Even though we make use of our human resources we are not making the most out of them, mainly because they are insecure. Our population feels insecure in areas like education, unemployment, health services, social housing, violence against women, the uncertainty of our future, legislation and governmental programs; it feels insecure about the leaders of this country. People worry when they see UI benefits shrink from year to year.

• (1700)

What will happen to this program in ten years? Will it be gone? Canadians are concerned when they hear about user fees in the health sector. Will they be able to get medical attention when they need it? Canadians are worried when they see that the budgets allocated to education and health care are being reduced all the time. They are concerned about the future. Will there still be work tomorrow, in spite of the promises made by some federal and provincial Liberal politicians?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried because of their leaders' lack of concern for current problems. Let me give you two specific examples. Some 30 farmers in my riding incurred substantial losses in the production of potato chips. A request for financial help was made to the previous government. The request was rejected. Yet, some farmers from the Atlantic provinces who suffered similar losses were compensated. The

farmers and their MPs made a request to the government in office. After two months, the government acknowledged receipt of their request, but took no concrete action.

Another group of individuals in my riding who are disillusioned with our leaders are those who were affected by the urea-formaldehyde foam insulation scandal. This tragedy occurred under the former Liberal government, of which some prominent members are still here. Let us not forget that the current Minister of Foreign Affairs was one of the key players in this episode.

Once again, I transmitted a request to the government in office asking it to take its responsibilities, instead of delegating them to the judicial process. The government acknowledged receipt of the request but did nothing else.

Throughout the debates in this House, we will have to keep in mind that all regions of Canada and all classes of citizens have to be treated equally. Is it right that, in Canada, 63,000 profitable companies do not pay taxes? Is it right that, in Canada, some millionaires manage to only pay a few hundred dollars in taxes every year? Is it right that, in Canada, powerful families can avoid paying taxes on billions of dollars through family trusts?

Middle-class workers know that the first penny they earn is taxed and that the government takes half of it.

In conclusion, if we want to balance our profits and expenditures, if we want to absorb our deficit, if we want our economy to resume its former role at the international level, if we want our wealth to be redistributed fairly, we have to restore confidence among Canadians. We have to meet their expectations and we have to answer their questions. We have to give back to Canadians the place that should always have been theirs: in other words, we have to realize that they are the number one resource in our economy.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask two questions. When we came into office, we were faced, and everybody agrees on that, with a deficit of about \$45 billion and an accumulated debt of about \$500 billion. My colleague said that there were a number of things he would have done, supposedly, if he had been in power to try to control the deficit and the debt.

He forgot to tell us how much he would have saved on each of his initiatives. Moreover, he said—and he will correct me if I am wrong—that he would have spent more. He said three things: Here is what I would have done, but without telling us how much he would have saved; here is what I would not have done, although some cuts have saved money and he did not say what would have replaced them. And finally, he said: Here is what I would have spent over and above what is already being spent.