

*Government Orders*

● (1615)

This budget is the arrow that will hit our deficit target without destroying the foundation we have built.

That is the difference between the budget that was tabled by the finance minister on Monday versus the budget we saw by the Reform Party the week previous. You can cut, but there are ways to cut. I would emphasize that this is the difference between the Liberal Party philosophy and the one across the way.

The 1995-96 the federal budget has gained widespread support. Yes, there is opposition that this budget is too strong or does not go far enough or will spell the end of Canadian society as we know it. The answers to those criticisms are easily found.

The budget comes down squarely at a crossroad for this country. It must be a strong budget as Canada meets the economic and fiscal challenges leading into the next century. If this budget went any further, slashing and burning government spending with reckless abandon, that is just where Canadians would find themselves, abandoned by their government.

As I said before, Liberals do not abandon people. By taking this sensible approach to our fiscal situation, it is this government that will ensure social programs and basic services remain apart of Canadian society.

This is a make or break budget for our deficit situation. We must not impede economic recovery and the potential for growth. By taking the steps contained in this budget, we are directly acting on our fiscal position so that Canada can maintain and not destroy the universal social programs that define this nation.

This budget must satisfy demands of international markets, a reality of living in a global trade environment. The financial community quickly graded this budget with high marks.

Interest rates have dropped and our dollar immediately climbed in the markets. The government did not panic. We listened to Canadian taxpayers, to international markets, to dozens and dozens of interest groups. Then we acted with sensible, intelligent and compassionate approaches.

We are, as the finance ministers says, breaking the back of the deficit. The international community has acknowledged we are on the right track. Many of my constituents have told me that they are impressed with this budget. Canadians obviously approve.

The budget takes necessary steps to secure Canada's fiscal position. The federal budget is just strong enough. The minister of finance has found the right mix of spending cuts and revenue measures to ensure a fiscal trend of deficit reduction.

This budget significantly reduces government spending but is crafted in a way that is fair to all regions of the country. We must bring our finances in order. To do that Canadians everywhere

must share, quite frankly, in the price we must pay for fiscal responsibility.

I hasten to add that sharing in the cost of reducing our deficit will not involve paying more tax. We will meet and exceed our deficit reduction targets without an increase in personal taxes.

The government has taken on the challenge of fiscal prudence while maintaining steady economic growth. This is not an easy task. Our choice is to fundamentally change the structure of government. Our focus is on reduced spending and a smaller, smarter government.

I have been a long time supporter of our public sector service. The reality we face as Canadians, and one that must be shared by our public servants, is that government must be streamlined. The public sector must find a way to become more efficient. It is a tough assignment but I am confident that Canada's public servants can bring government into the next century.

If anyone is capable of meeting that challenge, it is the men and women working in the public sector. These professionals are embarking on a difficult transition. I urge our public servants, many of whom I know personally, to apply their skills and to contribute to Canada's future.

We all know that the public sector will lose about 45,000 positions, but last year alone there were almost a half a million new jobs created in Canada. The objective of this delicate budget is to bring the government house in order without upsetting the balance of economic stimulus. A healthy economy will provide jobs for skilled people such as those who will be leaving the public service.

● (1620)

Government supports the creation of new jobs but it is business that does most of the hiring. We will realize savings from cutbacks in government spending but there is also increased revenue from newly created jobs.

My riding is located in northwestern Ontario. It is a region of Canada that can be used as an example of how the budget will impact Canadians. Northwestern Ontario will suffer from spending cuts and revenue measures. We will lose forestry and mining developing funding shared by the federal and provincial governments. The decrease in dairy subsidies will affect us and the gasoline tax will hurt.

I realize, as my constituents do, that we will survive. I think everyone of us realizes that we have to share the burden in one way or another. My riding has never depended on government for its survival. I think the majority of my constituents would rather see government get its act together instead of receiving a handout.

Northwestern Ontario has carved an economic foundation from the resource sectors such as forestry, mining and tourism.