

The Budget

then handing them back a penny saying: "Here is your tax reduction".

The government has also neglected to mention the fact that personal income taxes as a percentage of total federal spending have increased from 41.2 per cent in 1984-85 when this government took office to 47.7 per cent in 1992-93. This indicates that more and more the government has been shifting the burden of federal spending on to the backs of the middle class.

This so-called tax break is much like the government's attempt at spending reduction. These policies are designed to have Canadians believe that taxes and spending are actually being reduced but in reality both taxes and spending are actually increasing.

To be entirely fair to the government, however, as my colleagues have been saying, there are some good things in this budget for which we need to give them credit. One of the areas that I would like to give the government credit for is adopting the new child benefit. This new benefit finally targets child supplements more fairly to low and middle income families. The government must have been reading our Reform Party policy book where it states: "The Reform Party supports greater focusing of social policy benefits. We prefer to target benefits on those who need the help and do so in a rational and compassionate manner."

It is about time the government woke up to the need for this type of efficient method of providing for social benefits rather than clinging to the NDP dogma that allowed high income earners to receive family allowance cheques regardless of their need. Sometimes I wonder if the New Democrats really mean what they say about helping the poor. Why do we not target benefits to the poor rather than having those of us who are very comfortable in our income bracket still collecting government money when it is totally unnecessary?

At any rate, the government is certainly moving in the right direction with this new consolidated child benefit.

My only question is this. If this new benefit is to be streamlined and more effectively focused as the government says it is, why will it cost taxpayers an additional

\$400 million per year? I thought the government said it was reducing expenditures, not increasing them.

Besides this new child benefit, the government has also attempted to appropriate other Reform Party policies in this budget and nobody says it more clearly than the press because they know what is going on and it is very interesting to read what some of their articles say. I say attempted because the government has not really done the things that it says it actually has. Take, for example, this budget's privatization initiative or streamlining as it is referred to in the budget speech. The government is obviously gearing up for an election so that when the time comes it can go to the Canadian public and say: "Oh look, the Reform Party has nothing on us. In this last budget, we wound up, deferred, merged and privatized 46 government agencies, boards, commissions, corporations and advisory boards."

This all sounds very good on the surface, but when you look a little closer at what they are talking about, you really begin to see how insignificant many of these agencies actually are. CN (West Indies) Steamship Limited is a good example. Apparently it hardly exists except on paper. I ask then, how can the government "wind up" something that actually wound up a long time ago and then go back to the Canadian people and tell them about the government's great efforts toward privatization.

The real question should be this, why is CN (West Indies) Steamship Limited still on the books in the first place? Are Canadians supposed to be impressed that after seven and one-half years the government has finally awakened to this fact. I think not. I am quite sure Canadians see through this transparent budget and the veil of responsiveness to the Canadian people, but unfortunately, a veil only.

To conclude, let me say this. The government has promised spending reductions. In reality, we have seen spending increases. The national debt is now approaching half a trillion dollars, as I mentioned, and this budget does almost nothing to deal with it. The government says: "We are cutting \$1 billion."

Neither has this government done anything to actually stimulate the economy. The best it could come up with unfortunately is a half-baked scheme for a limited