

The Budget

built up \$489 billion by election day. We were again told that it was going to be fixed.

By 1997 at the next election we will have over \$600 billion. All this and the government thinks that a \$32 billion deficit next year is a great achievement. I am sorry, I do not think that is good enough.

In the past the government has always figured that it could formulate policy and then bring it down from on high. The government thought it knew what was best for Canadians and imposed this on the public.

The last government was particularly good at this trick but we know what happened to it. As much as the government does not want to hear this piece of news, the days when Ottawa told Canadians what to do and how to live are over. It is time for the Canadian grassroots to tell the politicians in Ottawa what to do, and they better do it.

For months now the government has made its problem even worse because it told Canadians it was listening. The public was optimistic that a new day had dawned but now it knows. Now Canadians realize that the government was going to do whatever it wanted regardless of what it heard in the prebudgetary consultations.

It is politics as usual in Ottawa. The government pretends to listen to make itself look good and assures Canadians it has turned a new leaf but the illusion never lasts. This budget is the splash of cold water to the face of the public it needed to realize where the government really stands.

Tax and grab is the name of the game and wishes of the public do not matter. Shame on you, Mr. Finance Minister. You sit on your gold plated pension while future Canadians are sacrificed. Not only is it a huge shame that the government has chosen to raise taxes, but when I ask myself if it is at least taking care of the debt and deficit properly, my answer is no.

Our federal debt is around \$550 billion and it is going up by \$10 billion every few months. The interest on this debt is huge and is going up by \$80,000 a minute. Every time the interest rates go up by 1 per cent the deficit rises by almost \$2 billion. By the time the next election is held our yearly interest payments will be over \$50 billion. This is what will really threaten our social safety net and nothing else.

The international money managers are happy today because they have just been guaranteed an ever increasing source of cash. Let me put it another way. Even if there were no more interest charges on this debt ever and a single Canadian put \$10,000 per year into paying off the debt they would reduce it to zero by the year 55000000 A.D.

Faced with this debt problem, what is the government's answer? What resolute action is it going to take to save our

country from economic peril? It has promised to reduce its overspending to roughly \$25 billion per year beyond what we can afford by the time the next election is called.

This will mean that Canadians will only have another \$100 billion dollars added to the national debt, bringing it over the \$600 billion mark. Wow, what commitment and responsible action. With those kinds of fiscal skills, maybe the cabinet ministers of this government should act as financial consultants when they are looking for new jobs after the next election. I am sure financial wizards like themselves should have no problem finding a job. Maybe the savings and loan companies in the U.S. are looking for senior executives.

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In all seriousness, it boggles my mind how the government can think that it has done enough. For months now Canadians have told the government that they are willing to bite the bullet in order to address the deficit problem, but the government continues to believe that it can do things as usual; it can have its cake and eat it too. It can spend the country into the ground with big government in one breath and pretend to fight the deficit in the next.

I am sorry, but it just will not do any more. Canadians are unwilling to play the old Ottawa game. They want real change, real reform, real spending cuts and no more taxes. The message is simple but the government is not listening. The actions needed are obvious but the government is afraid to act.

Over the coming year Canada will slip further and further into debt, the dollar will struggle and upward pressures on interest rates will be the norm. As interest rates rise our growth will slow and unemployed Canadians will continue to be frustrated in their efforts to find jobs. In the past the government has been fond of blaming such problems on the previous government. That time is now over. The government has made its bed and now it is time to lie in it. The people of Canada are smart. They know the bill of goods that has been sold to them and they will not forget.

The smoke and mirrors approach of Ottawa will not sell to the provinces or to the people of Canada. Enough is enough. Start from the top. Reduce MP pensions. Reduce the number of MPs. Reform and reduce the Senate. Cut upper and middle management and stop offloading cuts on the lower end of the pyramid.

We have reached a turning point in this government, a downward turn, a turn for the worse, and the Reform party will not stand idly by. Reformers have got the message, no more tax, fix the deficit. Now is the time for us to confront the government and force it to listen. We will tell it over and over, as many times as it takes, to try to get the message through that we have a serious problem and we must address it.