

Oral Questions

inability to develop a consistent and comprehensive national transportation policy.

If this application is approved more than 300 railway jobs will be lost and hundreds of others in industries depending on rail freight services will be put in jeopardy.

While this government talks boldly of improving Canadian competitiveness, its inaction and irresponsibility fail to provide Canadian workers and business with the means and services they need in order to compete.

The CP Rail Systems announcement lays the blame for its application directly on the government's shoulders. It says that the absence of coherent and construction government policies has placed it in this unhappy position.

The railway industry has pleaded with the Government of Canada for years to amend its taxation and other policies to permit it to compete, but this government, this Tory government, has been satisfied to sit by while the Canadian economy literally falls apart.

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POLITICS

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I know I am not alone among my colleagues in this House in being concerned about the low state of respect and confidence in which the Canadian people so obviously appear to hold the parliamentary process in general and this Parliament in particular.

It is not only a source of frustration for most politicians who address this profession as a high calling, but the public mood of cynicism about government at all levels in Canada is indeed dangerous to the effectiveness of the whole democratic system.

There are many causes for the chasm of confidence between leadership and followership in Canada, but perhaps none more so than the constant pursuit of partisan politics, the everlasting search for support, the vigorous and sometimes vicious battle for votes.

I have become convinced that to a considerable extent Canadian cynicism with respect to politicians comes from a perception that the practice of politics is frequently tainted with a principle almost akin to prostitution, that the noble purpose of serving the public is too often based

primarily on what measures will be electable rather than on what policies will be effective. We must commit ourselves to counter that perception. It is time for Parliament to become less partisan and more purposeful. Surely it is also time for each one of us as MPs to more—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, one of today's headlines in the *Financial Post* reads: "Resist Siren Call of the Spenders". I could not agree more.

One of the greatest mistakes the government could make would be to proceed down the road of massive government spending. More spending will simply add to the debt, rekindle inflation and increase interest rates. This would be a destructive course and should be avoided. As Canadians, we should know because previous governments have taken that path and we are still paying off their debts.

The fundamentals of a strong economy are in place and with some encouragement on the tax side, that is a reduction in taxes, specifically a reduction in the GST, along with additional yet fundamental changes in that area, consumer confidence will rebound, revenues will increase and the need for a massive injection of borrowed money into the economy can be avoided.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the member for Fredericton—York—Sunbury just made a remark that this Parliament should set an example and be a little bit less partisan. I would like in asking my question of the Prime Minister to note that yesterday the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party asked this government for some answers on economic policies and there was no answer from the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance.