

### *Restraint of Government Expenditures*

● (2040)

Then we found, when the government brought in its Speech from the Throne, that the Prime Minister seemed to reverse himself, whether it was a death bed repentance I do not know, but he came to the conclusion that, after all, the private enterprise system is very worth while and therefore he ought to draw back a bit so far as government involvement is concerned. So as we consider some of the statements made by the Prime Minister we begin to realize that perhaps the government is finally realizing that possibly it has been making a mistake, it has been following the wrong line of endeavour and it should consider some other activities.

With regard to government expenditure I should like to refer to a speech made by my leader. This might be of some interest to those who are asking what is the thinking and what are the proposals of the official opposition. I have here the notes for remarks made by our leader to a public meeting in Whitehorse, Yukon, on July 9. It is worth reading the entire speech into the record, but I will not do that. I will just commend it to the reading of the Liberal members. Perhaps it will enlighten their minds a little on what course should be followed and what might be more beneficial to the Canadian nation than the course which their leader has been following.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) stated:

The most visible inflationary hot-spot to all of us, no matter how many thousands of miles away from Ottawa, is the area of government spending.

He went on to point out:

The Trudeau administration . . . has increased its spending by over 35 per cent over the last two years. My government . . . would put a restraint on that spending. But that kind of restraint doesn't necessarily mean fewer jobs. We will not accept that kind of simplified premise on the part of the Trudeau government. Restraint can and will mean new jobs, if the savings are passed along to the taxpayer through personal tax cuts to lower income groups and through direct incentives to the private sector. The enterprise system is in danger of erosion in this country because of increased government intervention in the economy and also because of a denial of the need to stimulate and support a decentralized economy based on personal commitment and willingness to take risks and try new ventures.

With reference to small business he said:

The small business entrepreneur has an important part to play in the decentralization of our economy and the need for strengthened development in our regions. The people willing to take risks need our support. We should be offering incentives to stimulate that kind of development.

He went on to point out that what is needed is leadership in the development of our national economy at present. We can understand the frustration of the Liberals and their pleadings with the Progressive Conservatives to give them the answers. I remember when not too long ago they had all the answers and they told the people they knew better than anybody else. Of course they still try to tell them that, but the people are catching on. This is the reason that there is such a decline in their support across the country. Of course it is accentuated when we read in the paper that the Prime Minister referred to the lack of understanding and the credibility gap between government and people. He said that he can understand why there is such a credibility gap when they consider the bungling that they have been doing.

[Mr. Patterson.]

It is not necessary for me to impress upon the supporters of the government what the problem is. Their own leader admits it. I hope that for the good of Canada he will come to the point some day when he will try to put into operation some of the plans that will help to pull the nation out of the doldrums in which we find ourselves, but I must say I am rather cynical on that point. I cannot see how he is going to do it and I cannot see any possibility of that happening under the present government.

The government has announced its intention to eliminate some of the make-work programs to reduce expenditures.

**Mr. Benjamin:** What programs?

**Mr. Patterson:** I know your party is bankrupt of ideas. If you had been listening to the speeches made by members of this party in the House in the last several days, you would have a lot of answers.

**Mr. Benjamin:** What would you reduce?

**Mr. Patterson:** Possibly you are not paying much attention.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Address the Chair.

**Mr. Patterson:** As I was saying, the government has announced its intention to reduce expenditures, but it is going to introduce in another form year round programs to the tune of \$350 million in the first full year of operation, or so we are told by one of the government spokesmen. To me that does not sound like restraint. It seems to me it is just a transfer of money from one pocket to another or from one portfolio to another. It is not a reduction, it is a transfer.

**Mr. Raiton:** Explain how you can do that.

**Mr. Patterson:** How do I do that? Is that what the hon. member is asking? Why does he not ask his own party leaders who are talking about restraint on the one hand and who are transferring one type of program to carry on what has been done by other programs?

**Mr. Raiton:** Give me an example.

**Mr. Patterson:** I know that hon. members over there are confused.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. The hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson) has the floor and he should be heard.

**Mr. Patterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the interest that is being shown over there. I assure the hon. member that not only are we interested and are they interested but the whole country is interested in what the government will do and in how it will fulfil some of the promises it made through the years that it would wrestle unemployment to the ground and it would fight inflation, but every time a budget or a throne speech comes along we hear a rehash of the same things over and over again. We find that we are not making too much headway under this government.