

*The Budget*

a simple one and is the total purpose of this deficit oriented budget.

I mentioned it was two track. We will grow with it and out of the growth will come jobs and taxes paid back into the treasury. At the same time we will continue to reduce government operations by cuts and by making it more efficient. It will not be easy.

We have heard debate in the House over the past four or five days saying that we have done too much cutting. Others have said that we have not done enough. There is a fine balance and I think we have found that fine balance in this budget.

**Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member in his presentation said that he was quite proud that the government has met the deficit reduction target of 3 per cent of GDP in three years. The member stated that beyond 1996-97 the deficit will continue to fall under a Liberal government.

If this is the case why does the Liberal government not set a definite date for arriving at a balanced budget? Why does it not set a definite target? The positive results of setting a definite target will be that businesses will expand and new businesses will start up. That is what creates jobs. A positive effect would be lower interest rates and security for social programs which cannot be provided under this continual overspending.

Why will the government not commit to a definite date for eliminating the deficit?

**Mr. Richardson:** Mr. Speaker, the government has gained integrity. It has set targets. It is hitting the targets. The more we bring down the deficit the more the membership in the Reform Party goes down. I hope in the four years we keep bringing it down. When we get to zero I hope the membership in the Reform Party is zero.

**Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first let me congratulate my friend and colleague from Perth—Wellington—Waterloo.

I want to say a few words on the motion of the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. It goes without saying that I do not agree with the sentiments in his amendment. If we read what he is saying about offloading on the provinces and doing nothing for the unemployed and so on, I do not believe even he believes that really. It is a nice motion, nicely worded and grammatically correct, but factually incorrect, very incorrect, almost to the point of being irresponsible.

Sure the budget is tough. Is it tough enough? It depends on whether we listen to the Bloc or the Reform. The Bloc says it is much too tough and the Reform says it is not tough enough. I guess that means, as I say to my friend from Lotbinière, that we are probably doing something right over here.

It is a tough budget but it is not tough for the sake of being tough. There are people in this world who get their jollies out of doing tough, rough and crude things. This is not a tough budget for the sake of being tough. This is tough of necessity. This is the way we had to go.

• (1750)

**Mr. Benoit:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Simmons:** That is one of the not tough enough people who just spoke. It is a good opportunity for the gentleman from Vegreville. Does he disown or want to be part of the so-called Reform budget? Is he part of that budget? If so, let his constituents know that he would slash old age pensions to start with. It is not that kind of tough.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Ms. Clancy:** You tell him Roger. Who are these people?

**Mr. Simmons:** I say to my friend from Halifax that it is all right. We have just demonstrated that sometimes these people sing in tune. From time to time they sing in tune.

Madam Speaker, despite the heckling and despite the shouting, the government and the Minister of Finance are on the right track. Is it a perfect budget? No. We are working at getting it right. There are some things in the budget that I do not like. There are some things that other people do not like. On balance, is it the right approach? Yes.

One of my constituents told me—

**Mr. Speaker (Lethbridge):** That's because you are listening to us.

**Mr. Simmons:** The gentleman from Lethbridge has had 30 years to get it right. I bow to his wisdom on many points.

One of my constituents phoned me—

**Mr. Thompson:** Why aren't you out there looking for ships?

**Mr. Simmons:** Is the gentleman from Wild Rose not interested in what one of my constituents said? Would he deny that constituent the right to be heard here through me?

One of my constituents called and said, "Simmons, did you really clap for that budget? Did you applaud that budget?" I proceeded to tell him why, indeed, I did clap for the budget. I started by saying: "Is it the best thing in the world? Is it what we would really have liked to have done if circumstances were absolutely right? No". Then I put it to him in terms of his family budget. I said: "What a great morning it would be if you could get up and say to your wife, 'This month I have a plan. We are going to buy that Cadillac we have always wanted, the yacht and the extra skidoo'". She would say: "How are you going to do that?" "We are just going to borrow more. Whatever we need we will borrow."