

Government Orders

forces base there. My riding extends right into the Abbotsford area which has almost another flavour unto itself. It has a lot of urban commuters who drive in to Vancouver and work in the big city and it has a lot of retirement people as well.

It does not matter where I go in my riding, whether I am talking to a lumberjack or a logger up in Boston Bar with his red strap suspenders and the whole ball of wax, if I talk to him about the size of the deficit and having to live within your means, that logger knows exactly what I am talking about. He will poke his finger into my chest and tell me to tell this government to quit spending money it does not have just like he has to manage things in his own household.

If I extend down into Hope and into Chilliwack where I live and talk to a dairy farmer there who is worried about GATT and NAFTA and all sorts of things, he will tell me again as he sticks his finger into my chest: "You tell that government to quit spending money it does not have. Quit borrowing money to spend on things we do not even need. Quit obligating my children to pay your debts. Tell that government to quit spending money".

If I go into Abbotsford where people live on a fixed income they will come up to me at a public meeting and tell me the same story. It does not matter what you do or where you live, the people know you have to live within your means.

As soon as you get an allowance of two bucks a week when you are 10 years old, you know you have to live within your means. This government has not learned this lesson yet. This is why this government's borrowing authority act is asking for an unprecedented amount of money to keep government going. It has not learned the lessons it should have learned by watching, if I may be so bold, the PC government of the last eight, nine or ten years.

If the government continues to spend this sort of money in the dollar amounts it is proposing, the electorate will turf it out at the next election with such a vengeance that we may again find a party decimated to the ranks with one or two people left. It has to listen to the Canadian people. The Canadian people want restraint. They want budgetary sanity brought back into government and they expect this government to do its part by restricting spending, bringing in a budget that does not include increased spending measures. Do it now. Do it not only for the people sitting here today but, more important, do it for the people of Canada who are demanding it.

I ask the government to reconsider this bill. Do not pass it. Do not ask for this amount of money. Bring in a budget that we can support, something with a cap on spending, and do it now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and a question for the hon. member, who raised points which I wondered about several months ago already, and for which I found an answer. I am going to suggest that answer to the hon. member and, in the process, get his point of view.

The hon. member says that the government must live according to its means. He adds that, for years now, in fact two decades, we progressively got more and more into debt.

I noticed that too, and I wondered not only about the facts but also their cause. It is not enough to say that we notice something. We have to ask ourselves: How did we end up in this situation and why do we still find ourselves in it?

● (1700)

So, I asked myself this very simple question: Why is it that Mr. Trudeau—I think I can name him without violating the rules—started getting us into debt? Is it because he did not realize that it was not a very smart idea to incur debts? Or is it because he was incompetent or acted in bad faith? Certainly not! I am convinced that, at the time, Mr. Trudeau acted in good faith and followed what he believed to be excellent advice encouraging him to do what he did.

Several years later, Mr. Mulroney promised to correct the situation and he failed. Did Mr. Mulroney act in bad faith? I do not think so. I believe that Mr. Mulroney really wanted to reduce the national debt.

Did he receive bad advice? I think that, here in Ottawa, we have extremely competent civil servants who work very hard to make things happen. So, my question is: What happened?

[*English*]

Mr. Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Portneuf for his question. He raised a couple of interesting points. I am not exactly sure what Mr. Trudeau was thinking when he started us down this path. Perhaps it is just a Liberal frame of mind. I am not sure but time will tell.

I realize I am stretching it, but Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Mulroney have a similar problem or similar disease that afflicts new governments. It is called missed opportunities. When a new government takes the reins in Parliament it has a window of opportunity, which lasts a few months while the honeymoon period is on and while government members are glowing from ear to ear and from coast to coast, to make significant changes in the way that Parliament and Canada are run.