

In concluding, we want Quebecers to feel secure, and I think we are going about it the right way. This is a caring government, and I think the Chrétien government has proved repeatedly during the past one and half years that we are in touch with the grass roots, that we are fully aware of our financial obligations in terms of the national debt and that we also realize that the federal government has an obligation to take care of the neediest in our society.

[English]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Madam Speaker, for the benefit of those watching on television I would like to read the Bloc motion once again. It is non-votable and it reads as follows:

That this House call upon the government in its next budget to avoid any tax increases targeting low and middle income taxpayers and to consider instead trimming the fat from the government, eliminating tax expenditures which primarily benefit large corporations and wealthy Canadians and collecting on unpaid tax debts owed to the federal government.

How do we go about disagreeing with that? We cannot. It is like motherhood and apple pie. Furthermore, it makes sense. Why should we not be doing the things that the Bloc suggests? As a matter of fact, we are doing most of them now.

Our party agrees 100 per cent with the notion that we should avoid any tax increases targeting low and middle income taxpayers. We are very adamant in saying that we should not have any new taxes on anybody for any reason, period; not on people, not on businesses, not on anyone for any reason, not direct and not indirect. The reason for this is we have to establish the political will to do what has to be done.

Earlier in questions and comments I asked the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine to tell me what in his opinion was the most important single thing that needed to be done, what was the factor above all other factors that would ensure success in eliminating the deficit and getting our country's finances in order. For those watching and for those in the House it is no surprise that we did not get an answer to that question. I asked the question specifically because I wanted to know whether the member opposite really had a sense of what had to be done. We did not get an answer to the question. I assumed that the member opposite did not know what that ingredient was.

I am going to give him the answer. I am going to let him and other members opposite know what the single ingredient is which must be there. Without that ingredient there will not be success. It cannot happen. That single ingredient is political will. Members opposite control the purse strings. They have their feet on the pedals and their hands on the wheel that steers our nation. We in opposition can influence but we do not make the final decision. It is the government opposite that makes the

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final decision. Unless the government opposite has the political will to do what has to be done it simply will not be achieved.

How does it go about getting this political will? What does it take? That is why it is so important that the government not look for tax fairness at this time. Tax fairness is not the issue. Spending is the issue.

• (1625)

If we allow ourselves as a Parliament to wriggle off the hook instead of saying to ourselves our problem is that spending is out of control, instead of being absolutely committed and convinced of this and start burrowing around looking for little ways that we can pick up a few bucks here and a few bucks there, we will very quickly lose the political will to do what has to be done, reduce spending.

Programs have to go. If we do not do it we absolutely will not achieve the goal that has to be achieved. Our nation is quickly getting behind the power curve financially.

For those present who do not understand what the power curve means, getting behind the power curve is an aviation term. What that means is that if a person is flying along and there is a mountain ahead and that person pulls the nose of the aircraft up, they will have to increase power so that they can climb up over that mountain. If there is not enough power in that aircraft to keep the nose up and to keep flying, they will very quickly lose speed, lose control, spin, crash and burn.

Our nation is in an aircraft and there is a mountain of debt ahead of us. That mountain of debt is growing rapidly through the magic of compound interest which is people's greatest enemy when they owe money and their greatest friend when they do not owe money.

Here we are hurdling along in the sky. This mountain of debt is in front of us and we have to keep pulling our nose up. As we pull our nose up, which is increased taxes, we are losing power.

There is the point when our economy has lost so much power because we have to keep increasing the taxes so that we can get over the mountain we simply will not be able to do it. That is why the political will to get our spending under control is of critical importance.

That is not to say that there are not elements of our taxation policy which should not be corrected. That is not to say that my colleague and friend from St. Hyacinth—Bagot is not absolutely correct in saying that in our tax life you have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to fill in your tax form.

Have members ever tried to make money in this country? People pay taxes on making money. People pay taxes on spending money. Every time we turn around there is a disincentive to be productive in our economy. There is an incentive to be non-productive.