

Routine Proceedings

mates which is supposed to reflect the detailed patterns of expenditures represented in the budget.

Subsequently, at three minutes to eleven, at our request, because no effort was made to make it possible on the initiative of Treasury Board to provide us with the information or to provide us with the resources to get the information, we began to get a notion of why it was necessary to obscure from us the detailed information.

When we asked Health and Welfare representatives about the detailed cuts, we discovered, for example, that there was a \$2.7 million cut in expenditures for alcohol and drug programs, cuts to the funded drug strategy, cuts in the response of this government to what the Prime Minister described as a drug crisis in this country.

You probably listened to the radio this morning and yesterday, Madam Speaker, and learned that we are sending Canadians to California to be treated for drug addiction. At the same time, we have the spectacle of a \$2.7 million cut here.

Remember the promises with respect to child care? We learned \$1.7 million is cut from child care initiatives, \$3.5 million cut from the seniors independence program and \$3.9 million cut from health research.

We queried the Secretary of State about the \$23 million cuts in the budget. There was no information provided to us to find out what these cuts constitute. We did not get all of the information but, the member waved around a couple of pieces of paper and told us that the women's program is being cut by \$1.6 million and the youth program is being cut by \$6.4 million. I guess in the absence of a true Minister of State for Youth—Madam Speaker, I know this is very pertinent for you—the government just chopped off \$6.4 million. The Canadian university program was eliminated and aboriginal programs cut by \$9.8 million in ways we do not even quite understand. We do know that native newspapers are going to be eliminated.

We were rushed into a tightly crowded room and denied specific information because this government, quite evidently, would be embarrassed by an announcement, at this stage of the game, of the details of the expenditures. The government would rather wait until

some weeks have passed, particularly next week when no one will be around here, before leaking out bit by bit the information on the 13 departmental documents of which we have been deprived.

Some have called this the "Pass the Buck Budget". It is a budget that was, as my colleague indicated, announced in the context of no tax increases. Never mind the \$7.6 billion increase in collected income taxes resulting from last year's actions. Never mind the GST that begins next year. Never mind the cuts in unemployment insurance benefits that will mean increased costs at the municipal level for welfare expenditures and the increased premiums the cities will have to pay. Never mind the hundreds of costs that are going to be devolved upon the municipalities ultimately and be paid for by the hugely regressive tax on property.

The government washes its hands, like Pontius Pilate, as the costs devolve on those least able to pay. But, \$2,500 is going to be saved by everybody as a result of this budget. It is very easy to hide averages among 25 million people but, I have a sneaking hunch that the greatest benefit is going to go to the usual people on behalf of whom this government works. The government describes the result of this budget as follows, and I quote: "The rising standard of living and the quality of life second to none in the world will be achieved as a result of the Budget tabled yesterday".

This budget is hugely dependent upon certain presumptions about interest rates over the coming year. Even as I stand here, the markets around the world are anticipating yet higher interest rates. We will have a chance to get this right for the next budget, the corrected budget, that the Minister of Finance will undoubtedly have to take. I hope that the President of the Treasury Board will arrange a room with sufficient seats, that he will provide us with the detailed estimates, the Part III estimates for all the departments so at that stage of the game, we can judge what is going on.

The interest rates are a very important aspect of this. If he is off by 1 per cent, that is \$1.5 billion cut from the \$225 that people are supposed to be saving all around the country as a result of this budget. It borders on the ridiculous.