

I could think of other areas in which the Government could choose to cut back that would make more economic sense and allow us to continue to support the artists in this country, that would allow us to benefit from their creative talents and the richness which they provide to our culture.

In conclusion, I would like to challenge Members opposite to explain why these cuts are being made. I have heard no rational reason that could be backed up with facts for making cuts in the arts field.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the Hon. Member's speech. Very near the end he mentioned the fact that he could suggest several other areas in which the Government could cut back. He said that 78 per cent of the people want federal money for the arts and culture. Of course, the majority of the people of Canada said that they wanted a cut in the deficit. Is the Hon. Member suggesting that we should cut into our social programs, that we should default on paying off the debt, or that we should not give any more money to higher education? In which areas is he suggesting the cuts should be made?

He also pointed out that 1.8 per cent of the budget goes toward culture. It should be noted that the agricultural area, although it employs more people than the arts and culture fields, receives a lesser percentage of the budget. Can the Hon. Member tell us where he would make those cuts in federal programs in order to leave the culture budget as it is?

I should also point out that \$75 million of that money went toward the CBC cuts. The CBC indicated that 1,500 people would have to be laid off when the original cut was announced. However, fewer than half that number have been laid off. I believe the CBC has done a commendable job in ensuring that as few people as possible have been eliminated.

Where does the Member see the great gaps which are being created in our cultural mosaic? Where does he think we should make the cuts?

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal with a couple of points which the Hon. Member raised. First, he said that Canadians asked for a reduced deficit. If I remember accurately what went on during the election campaign, the Conservatives said that the deficit would be reduced by cutting out waste. The Conservatives said that they would not cut any useful programs or worth-while activities. That is the kind of deficit reduction for which Canadians voted. Now that the Conservatives are in office, they are cutting into very valuable public spending which affects the quality of life in Canada and the level of employment. That is not what the Conservatives promised when they were running for office.

The Hon. Member asked where we should cut. We could examine the tax expenditures which take place in Canada. How much money goes out by way of tax write-offs to large corporations, in the name of economic development or job creation, which are effective and result in the corporations' stated objectives? We could examine that area. We could also examine the whole question of the oil industry, which continues to receive windfall profits and grants from the Govern-

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ment. What about the money which was spent on new military uniforms? Was that a necessary expenditure? Was that expenditures preferable over cuts in the arts?

Mr. St. Germain: Mr. Speaker, I have a great respect for the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper), being a Manitoban by birth. However, it always bothers me when NDP Members rise in the House and fail to recognize fiscal responsibility. If the NDP and the Liberals had continued with their coalition programs of fiscal irresponsibility, there would be no arts in this country. There would be absolute devastation as far as the economy is concerned.

● (1630)

Those Hon. Members are continually saying that they want to tear down the successful to build up we don't know what. They advocate an equal distribution of nothing. The arts in this country have not and will not be neglected by our Party. We will stand front and centre in support of them, but we have to be responsible. The type of irresponsibility which has led us to the brink of financial disaster could totally destroy any possibility of a future for any Canadian, let alone the future of the arts.

I don't know why the Hon. Member—and I would like him to respond to this—and his Party are so afraid of the private sector, of private people becoming involved. This great country evolved and developed not because of socialistic ideas or government involvement, but because people had a hope and a dream.

Mr. Keeper: What about the CPR?

Mr. St. Germain: The Hon. Member cites the CPR. The CPR operates, as he well knows, on the basis of a free enterprise system.

Mr. Keeper: That was public funding.

Mr. St. Germain: I ask the Hon. Member why he and his Party are so afraid of ordinary Canadians, ordinary people, building businesses?

Mr. Keeper: Give me some time to answer the question.

Mr. St. Germain: I'll give you a chance to answer the question. I would love to. Why are you afraid of the private sector?

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I will deal with the question asked by the Hon. Member as to why we are afraid of the private sector. We are not afraid of the private sector. We believe in a mixed economy.

Ms. Coppes: That's us.

Mr. Nunziata: That's us.

Mr. Keeper: Let me say this about public spending in the arts field: the reason that cuts in public spending are damaging both to the economy and to any deficit reduction is that