

We know that there is waste in this government. There is waste in every institution in this country. There is waste in every family.

We do not need a bill to legislate expenditure control, especially a bill like this that has so many loopholes in it that if all of a sudden something comes along, an economic downturn or whatever, we ignore the bill anyway. What kind of hypocrisy is that?

This is the nation's boardroom. People in Canada are counting on us to put our energy and creativity into ways and means of putting people back to work.

One way to do that is to listen to the small businessmen of this country. As the Minister of State for Finance said yesterday, there are 1,700,000 businesses in this country. If we can mobilize and motivate that force, then we can eradicate unemployment in this country almost overnight.

The one issue that small business, the entrepreneurship of this country, keeps coming back to us on is tax reform. If we were to address that issue, then so many other things would fall into place.

The member for Gander—Grand Falls gave a beautiful example today when he talked about a legal tax preference written into the tax act of Canada which actually encourages a company to invest close to \$1 billion offshore.

If we reform the tax act of this country, we could have those capital flows reversing the other way. If we reform the tax structure of this nation, we could have the capital flows, the investment coming this way.

The foreign investment in this country in the last 18 months is down close to 50 per cent.

There are many reasons for that. Many of those foreign investors will cite our tax designs as being one of the reasons they are frustrated or why they do not have that extra energy, that extra burst of enthusiasm to try and invest in this country.

If we were to change the tax act and get the capital investment flows back into this country, that would allow and create a situation again where the entrepreneurs would have the capital to buy new equipment and new technology. This would allow us to be even more efficient. All of that can be done through the tax act.

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What have we done? The core problem, the fundamental problem, the problem that we hear of when we go door to door and store to store in our communities, and it does not matter what region of the country, it is every region where people tell us is that the tax designs are not working. What do we do instead of listening? We throw the GST at them, a paper burden, a disincentive to productivity, a disincentive to tourism. It is unbelievable.

• (1220)

I cannot believe the rumour I hear right now. Some groups are saying that we should cut the GST by 1 per cent and that will make things better. Cutting the GST by 1 per cent would be an insult to most Canadians. They want the GST scrapped. It must be scrapped. We must come up with an alternative.

My leader has said repeatedly that it will be scrapped. Make no mistake about that, and the press should not make any mistake about that. We are scrapping that GST, if it is the only thing we do. It is affecting the spirit and it is affecting the productive capacity of this country in every region.

Yes, it will be tough to reform the tax act of this country. That is the kind of legislative agenda that we should be taking on in this House rather than, as my colleague the critic for finance stated earlier, some piece of legislation that is only cosmetic.

I believe the people of Canada see through that smoke and mirrors, that cosmetic approach. They are not going to buy it. The time is now, because the situation is so desperate, that we do something about this issue. The government should reflect at the end of today's debate on this bill respecting control of government expenditure and realize that the nation does not want to hear about some little gimmick for controlling expenditures that has all kinds of loopholes and options for change whenever the government needs them.

This is the nation's legislature. Many people on that side of the House think that the cabinet runs this country. It is not the cabinet. This is the debating room on issues of concern to the people of Canada. It is not the cabinet. They can go back to their cabinet, take their decisions and be responsible for them. People are talking about unemployment, tax designs, and some of the desperate situations like that faced by the fishery in Atlantic Canada right now. They want them debated in this room, and not in the middle of the night. If it has to