

word as the hon. member appears to be doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rinfret): Order. The hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi.

Mr. Grafftey: What does the quality of Canadian life, or democracy mean to our 500,000 rural families who live on an annual income of less than \$2,000? Does this budget or what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) is doing help those people? What about the quality of Canadian life when the Treasury Board cuts a billion dollars off the estimates? We are going to examine the question of whether or not they have really done so. We already have a shortage of doctors and we are going to have a greater shortage as the years go by. In spite of this, one of first cut-backs made was the proposed expansion of medical schools. What about the quality of Canadian life when we cut back on research, one thing a viable nation needs to spend more and more upon? What a way to run a country.

I ask every member in this house, is not one of the main functions of government to help and encourage the dispossessed? In a democracy, is not one of the main functions of government to promote equality of opportunity? I ask again, what are the effects of the government's policies on those already up against it? Need I say more?

When a government, as a result of misjudgment and miscalculation, is obliged to cut \$1 billion from the estimates, even though it is mostly a public relations gimmick, it does not create stability either at the local or national levels. The effect on those who had made plans for the future based on legitimate expectations is incalculable. In an area where stability is required the government has unwittingly encouraged havoc and chaos.

I wish to touch upon two points which in my view are guide lines to help avoid a similar mess in the future. They are, first, the establishment of priorities in the social and economic fields and, second, constitutional revision and modernization. What about the establishment of priorities? I admit that a lot of loose talk has surrounded this subject. Invoking the principle often sounds like the old, I am for motherhood speech. Surely, however, the time has come to be specific. This government has consistently refused to plan its own priorities on the one hand and priorities with the provinces on the other hand. Coupled with this, sir, it is attempting

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to be all things to all men and do everything at once, but now the chickens have come home to roost.

As I have already said, this government has systematically destroyed its options for manoeuvre. What greater indictment could be made of a government? After all, we realize that since government is getting bigger and bigger a lot of decision-making power is left to our very excellent bureaucracy. However, decision-making power at the top level is what a government must have and should exercise. What greater indictment can we make of the government, in the face of the chaotic economic situation this nation faces, than the fact it has systematically destroyed its options for manoeuvre? Rather than tying down inflation the government has tied its own hands behind its back. Rather than build viable economic policies the government has built itself into a box. If the federal authority would only exercise the leadership expected of it and co-operate with the provinces in establishing priorities, it is my belief that many would be pleasantly surprised by the degree of agreement we would find.

Canadians recognize that while governments cannot be run completely like businesses some sound business principles must be brought into governmental affairs. The short and long term planning of priorities, agreeing on what must be done first, is one of those principles, a principle forgotten by this administration. The alternative is doing what this government has done, doing everything badly all at once while the nation goes broke.

Mr. Chrétien: May I ask a question?

Mr. Grafftey: I ask the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Chrétien), is the nation not almost broke?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Grafftey) allow me a question?

[English]

Mr. Grafftey: I will answer questions at the end of my speech. I wish to turn now to constitutional revision. The present Minister of Finance, by calling for the redistribution of taxing powers and general tax reforms before we have a basic constitutional revision and allocation of modern powers and problems to the appropriate level of government, is putting the cart before the horse. This government has consistently refused, as I