

Oral Questions

[English]

• (1415)

THE BUDGET

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the constituents of Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to give fair warning to the government in anticipation of its pending budget.

Canadians have been contacting Reform Party members of Parliament to express their rage about any possible taxation of dental benefits and RRSPs by the Liberal government. We have received thousands of calls, letters and petitions.

The Reform Party opposes any increase in the general tax burden imposed on Canadians. The budget must be balanced, but through expenditure reductions rather than tax increases.

Does this government not understand that Canadians want a reduction in the burden of government? In my riding over the last three weeks my constituents have made it perfectly clear: reduce the deficit without increasing taxes. Our voices of protest must stop the Liberals from making any tax grab.

I give fair warning to the government: do not tax dental benefits or RRSPs, do not raise any taxes, reduce spending.

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CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT

Mrs. Jane Stewart (Brant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comments made by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands denying any racism in the video depicting the conduct of some members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment indicate how difficult it is to understand racism.

In the video a black paratrooper, like his white colleagues, was personally humiliated but in addition he was challenged and degraded at a second level. In the video his captors wrote on his back with excrement "I love the KKK". Had they written that message on a white recruit the meaning would have been lost. Its intended effect was only achieved because its host was black. In this case the individual was humiliated but as well all members of his race were implicated and humiliated.

This is racism in its simplest form; so simple that it can become systemic in our society.

We can say and be proud that Canada is not a racist nation. However, if we do not recognize racism when it exists and when it occurs I am afraid that our protestations may become hollow and untrue.

LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, economic development, growth and jobs are the priorities of the government. I encourage the Prime Minister and the government to continue with this agenda during 1995.

During the past year this government has created an economy and the confidence to enable thousands of permanent jobs to be created across Canada. As a matter of fact, our country is a leader in growth among all G-7 nations.

This agenda is working. We are on the road to recovery and Canadians have renewed pride and confidence in our country and in our economy. Atlantic Canadians have a goal of self-sufficiency and the jobs and growth agenda is an important part of the future achievement of this goal.

We must continue with our agenda for jobs and growth to build and even stronger economic climate that will provide the opportunity for employment for all Canadians.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

INCOME TAX

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now that the financial community is becoming increasingly sceptical about the government's willingness to deal with the deficit, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have refused to promise not to raise taxes in the next budget. Once again, the government is about to attack the middle class, which is already heavily taxed.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister. How can the Prime Minister claim that, three weeks before the budget, he still does not know whether the government will raise taxes and, above all, how can he renege with such impunity on a campaign promise that he would not raise taxes during the first two years of his mandate?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the final decisions concerning the budget have yet to be made, so it would be premature for me to say anything definitive on certain aspects of the budget.

What we have to do is not an easy job. Decisions are in the process of being made, but they are not final. As soon as we have finished the job, the Minister of Finance will be able to announce the budget date, and members will get their answers on the night the budget is brought down.