

We all want clean air and we all look out for the environment; but not the way the Liberals are doing it, by forcing carbon taxes on provinces that do not want them, Deepak Obhrai tells Parliament, speaking on the Government's 2018 Budget Implementation Act.

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Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):

Madam Speaker, it is always nice to get up in the House and talk about sensible policies and not shout, the way my hon. colleague does, with all his fluff and bluff. I have been listening for the last 16 years. He was in the opposition, and now he is over there.

Today the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued his report. It is timely, as we are debating the budget bill. Of course, I would remind all my listeners out there that today the government brought in closure so it could stifle debate, because there are a lot of issues, as has been pointed out by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Very clearly, when the government was over there, it was telling Canadians that it would not increase the deficit by more than \$10 billion and would be bringing in a balanced budget by 2019. These were the promises the Liberals made. Today the Parliamentary Budget Officer said quite clearly that everything they did was wrong. Their projections were wrong. The estimates are wrong. They are fooling Canadians by using different numbers. It is good that the Parliamentary Budget Officer talked about it today.

Most importantly, he talked about the carbon tax the Liberals are forcing on all Canadians and all the provinces, and the fact that the carbon tax is supposed to be good for the economy and the country. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has quite clearly stated that the way they are going is not the right approach.

Let me be very clear on one issue in reference to carbon taxes. All of us want clean air. All of us look out for the environment. We live in this country. It is our environment. We want a clean environment, but not the way the Liberals are going, by forcing carbon taxes on provinces that do not want them. Saskatchewan does not want it, and the, hopefully, Conservative government in Ontario does not want it. The, hopefully, Conservative government, in Alberta does not want it. Then, lo and behold, we have the government in British Columbia being held hostage by three Green members.

Three Green members are holding hostage the whole of Canada on the Trans Mountain pipeline. Premier Horgan will not agree because he would lose the government. He does not want to go to the people. If he is so confident about speaking to the Trans Mountain pipeline, and all the polls are showing that British Columbians want it, someone just said that the easiest way to resolve it is to go to the people. That is the best way in a democracy. He would probably find that he would get a pink slip to go back to the unemployment line.

However, the question here is about the government and its budget. We just heard the government side talk about reducing taxes for the middle class. We hear the Liberals talk about it here, but we never hear them talk about their increase in taxes, the payroll taxes. Actually, the great indication by the Fraser Institute showed how much Canadians are paying in direct and indirect taxes. It is what they call "freedom day". For the first time in the history of our country, under the previous Conservative government, we pulled that back into June. The date was

sometime in June because of our reduction of taxes, but under this government, freedom day has gone back into July. That is the real issue.

That is where it really shows where the government, by not by showing the whole picture, is raising taxes. We have had a serious problem over here on this fact. The Liberals are just blindly spending money.

One of the key issues I talked about last time was the government of China's infrastructure bank. We have already given half a billion dollars to it. Why is that? Why are we giving it to that bank? It does not do anything good for us. It is great for China, but not for us. We already contributed to the African Development Bank, to the Asian Development Bank, and to the Inter-American Development Bank. We are already doing our bit to help countries through these development banks. Why are we following this with a half a billion dollars?

These are questions Canadians are asking. Where is our money going? Why does the deficit keep increasing?

The Liberals came out with infrastructure funding. However, in a province like mine, Alberta, we do not know what the government is doing. Where is this infrastructure funding going?

The issue here is on the fundamental issues of economic progress, and in this case it is the Trans Mountain pipeline, which everybody agrees is good for Canada. Of course, the NDP members do not agree, but that is all right; they are a small bunch. The fact remains that it is good for the country. However, the question is on leadership. This is where leadership needs to be shown, and it is not coming from the government. We have waited and waited, but nothing is happening.

We agree that we also want a clean environment, but there are ways and means of doing that, and it is not in stifling economic growth. When jobs and economic growth are lost what happens? The budget goes up and taxes go up. Somewhere down the line, we will have to pay this deficit.

Let us look at the deficit. The PBO came out and said that there would be a \$22.1 billion shortfall this fiscal year. The Liberals projected \$18.1 billion. Again, according to the Liberals' figures, the projected deficit would be \$17.5 billion. However, the PBO projects \$21.4 billion. The total is a \$8 billion difference in deficit. Also, according to the PBO, there is a 5% chance of the budget being balanced by 2025. However, the Liberals are not interested in that, because, after all, when they lose power, they will leave this whole mess behind.

We left the economy in very good standing, and the Liberals quoted all these figures. I remember when they wanted change in Canada and sunny ways, but as they progressed, all the policies we had put in place they carried on with and implemented. Why? Because they were good policies. Despite the fact that the Liberals keep trying to blame the Conservatives for everything, it is not going to fly. They had good management from us when they took over. When they are gone, and hopefully we will take over, we will have to clean up their mess and look at the deficit.

Canadians are concerned where the government is going. What is the purpose of the government? Back home in Africa, we say that the ostrich has its head in the sand. The Liberals have their heads in the sand. They are not looking around at what is going on. They will not answer to the future generation, because they will not be around.

However, the issue is always on how we bring confidence to Canadian businesses. It is interesting that in Lima, the Prime Minister said that big projects would go ahead. Well, big projects are not going ahead in our country under the current government.

The Liberals keep talking about Conservatives not building pipelines. We built the environment where the energy industry grew up. The Liberals are running something where the energy industry is going down under their leadership. However, it is good to see that the NDP government in Alberta agrees with us.

The fact is that we need common sense policies, but they are not coming from the Liberals. We cannot expect any common sense policies coming from that side.