

Hammond cannot get his sums right on HS2 – Peter Dowd

This

morning the Chancellor, Phillip Hammond, further proved that he and the Conservatives have no grip on the public finances. After seven years of Tory economic failure, which has seen £700 billion added to the national debt despite massive spending cuts, every household in Britain should fear more years of Tory failure and incompetence.

In

the course of only five minutes of a car-crash interview, Philip Hammond showed that he:

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Doesn't

know the cost of his government's biggest single investment, the HS2 high-speed line, getting the cost wrong by more than a staggering £20 billion;

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Doesn't

know how his own fiscal rule for spending works as he confused day-to-day spending and investment spending;

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Doesn't

have any clear plan in place to balance the public finances, including filling the £2 billion black hole that his National Insurance u-turn created.

Just

a day after Labour published its comprehensive and fully-costed plans for the economy, the Tories' plans are in total disarray. The Chancellor couldn't even

rule out further tax hikes for low and middle earners, unlike Labour who have guaranteed no rises in employee National Insurance, no rises in VAT, and no rises in income tax for 95 per cent of taxpayers.

And

Phillip Hammond confirmed that relations between him and Number 10 are so bad that they are reduced to expletive-laden phone calls.

Even

Theresa May doesn't trust Philip Hammond any more, refusing to confirm today that he will stay on as Chancellor after the election. If the Prime Minister can't trust her own Chancellor, why should the British people?

Labour's

Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Peter Dowd, said

"This morning Philip Hammond has shown the Conservatives have no grip of the public finances. It is worrying that the Chancellor clearly doesn't know how much a massive infrastructure project currently underway will cost, or the difference between revenue and capital spending. The fact he doesn't know how much money he needs to put aside for major capital infrastructure projects and has no plan to balance the public finances beggars belief.

"We should not forget that there is already a £2 billion black hole in his first Budget following his u-turn on increasing National Insurance. Nor should we forget he has been part of a Tory government that has added £700 billion to the national debt – more than all Labour governments in history."

"Labour is the only party with a fully costed plan to revive Britain's economy and close the Conservatives' never ending budget deficit, while protecting everyone from tax increases on VAT and NICs, as well as guaranteeing 95 per cent of income taxpayers won't face income tax rises."