

Government Orders

the same programs? We have been making this point in the House for months.

The government does not care about the remote parts of Canada. It is prepared to write them off for the sole purpose of ensuring that it can win seats in central Canada. That is all that is of interest to it. One only has to look at the last set of election results to realize how precarious the government's position is. In the province of Ontario, the government barely won half the seats in the province. In fact, this party did exceedingly well in that province. The fact that so many of us are here from eastern Ontario is testimony to the government's failure to sell its vision of Canada, even in large parts of Ontario. I realize Quebec was a different situation, but I am sure the next election will correct that.

This Economic Council report perhaps did not get all the publicity it might have received when it was tabled. Perhaps that is why we have not heard a lot about it. Certainly, we have not heard the Minister of Finance discussing it at any length, but it certainly attracted some attention in other places.

One was the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in its pre-budget submission to the Minister of Finance which, of course, he would not receive in person. It had to be delivered. The federation strongly recommended that the minister look at the report of the Economic Council and adopt the recommendations contained in it.

Other groups made similar submissions to the Minister of Finance and called on the government to stop the cuts in areas that were going to be damaging to the regions of Canada. Yet, the government continued on its merry way, ignoring the advice of the Economic Council and choosing instead to adopt its own set of advice which will leave us with a substantial national deficit in Canada throughout the remaining term of this government and for many years beyond. The Minister of State for Finance, I am sure, could give us the figures for the deficit that the minister is projecting for the next few years. I would suggest that if Canadians are to take the minister's figures at face value, at least the one for five years from now—and I assume it is going to be in the \$14 billion or \$15 billion range—it should be doubled.

Certainly that has been the experience with this government in the past.

• (1700)

The figure that the Minister of Finance gave us in 1985 in his budget was that the deficit this year would be under \$15 billion. In fact, we know it will be more than \$30 billion. The minister's projections are consistently wrong and I suggest that when we hear them we should double them, at least if we are projecting a few years ahead.

The other thing that I thought might be useful is to look at the government's own document, *A New Direction for Canada; An Agenda for Economic Renewal*. This was the document that was tabled in the House of Commons on November 8, 1984. It was supposed to be the great new policy paper that explained the wonderful things that were going to happen to Canadians through the next five years of Tory mismanagement. Certainly it did indicate a certain weakness in government.

I am glad to see that the Minister of Transport has joined us. His knowledge of control of government expenditure, I know, is substantial. I am sure that in the next year he will cut the cost of the Department of Transport by reducing the gouged salaries that are being paid to the officers of Canadian National. Having closed down the railway in Canada, supposedly to cut government subsidies, the government now takes the extra subsidies and piles it into its own pocket.

These payments should not be allowed. This government should roll those increases back. That is where the money is going. Where are the profits going? They are going into the pockets of the directors in the form of increased fees. It should not be happening. This government says it needs the money for the railroads. It closed down a whole lot of lines in VIA Rail and now it is going to pay the people who did that hatchet job additional money. That is unfair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments? Debate. The hon. member for Ontario.

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate today. I must extend to you my condolences. I am on duty now. I have been sitting here listening to a speech. From four until seven on Monday afternoon I am obliged to come to this House and represent the interests of my party, as do a lot of our other colleagues. We have to sit and listen to speeches. I have just listened to a speech for 20 minutes