

Government Orders

The substantial expenditure actions in the February 1990 budget together with measures announced by the President of the Treasury Board in December reinforce the momentum of earlier measures. They ensure the goals of the April 1989 budget will be reached. What could only be aimed at in the medium term five years ago is increasingly within reach today.

The deficit will be cut by more than half to \$14 billion in 1993-1994. The following year it is predicted to fall to \$10 billion or about 1 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, the lowest level in 25 years. Financial requirements will be in surplus by 1994-1995, allowing the government to begin paying back the debt it previously borrowed on capital markets. The burden of the debt will be falling. The debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio stabilizes in 1991-1992 and declines thereafter, the first decline since 1974-75.

In short, the fiscal environment required for sustained, non-inflationary, economic growth will be firmly in place.

I would like to speak to members of the opposition parties for a few moments, Madam Speaker, if I might. During the course of this debate in this Parliament and the previous Parliament they had a tendency to blame the Government of Canada for a debt situation for which they must bear the greatest burden for it being there in the first place. While recognizing the seriousness of the debt, they have been the same persons who have blindly criticized every cut the Government of Canada has made. They are the very same members of Parliament who have advocated that every imaginable, worth-while project for this country be put in place.

You cannot legitimately face the Canadian people and argue both dimensions of that argument. You cannot make claims as to the seriousness of the debt and that the deficit must come down, while at the same time argue that every worth-while program should be funded to its optimum. It would be nice if there were such a magic solution, if all Canadians in their businesses, families, homes, or in the operation of government could sit and think of what is good, nice, enjoyable and would bring pleasure and security, and then irrespective of the cost put forward some scheme that we spend that amount of money.

There is an isolation of two groups of people in Canada: the NDP and the Liberals. They are the only ones who have the luxury of being able to advocate the wonderfulness of expending on everything, while never having to bear the responsibility for its payment. They also have the luxury of coming before Parliament when there is a borrowing authority bill before it to criticize the debt and say it should not be there, when it is that very debt itself which has over a period of two Parliaments and beyond, through a history of Liberal governments, has been the very structural reason for this problem in the first place. Canadians are not blind to the fact that this problem arises because of a history of irresponsibility toward the financial management of our country. This situation is somewhat analogous to turning the *Queen Mary* around in the Battle River.

We have a significant problem that has momentum. Short of cancelling 12 government departments, there is no fast turnaround except to work our way out of this problem. The primary engine of doing so, though it will require some increase in revenues and curtailing of expenditures which we have done, the prime opportunity for Canada to work its way out of this is by economic expansion. Because we have had an average 20 per cent economic growth over a period of some five years, we are now put into a situation where the debt *vis-à-vis* the question of the Gross Domestic Product has actually fallen by 45 per cent.

It is because of the growth and intention for continued growth, as well as trade policies and structured tax policies that we are bringing into place, that this country can now see the light at the end of the tunnel. We are on track, and what we need now is the stability to carry this program to its logical conclusion so that Canadians in all parts of the country can rid themselves of the debt given to us by previous governments and reinforced by the New Democratic Party who loves to spend.

The size of the New Democratic Party gives it the luxury to imagine all those nice things and advocate that it would do them if it were in government. At the same time it has the privilege of being able to say that the debt is too high and should be cut without ever offering an option of how it can spend more and cut the debt faster. It is something that can only exist in the mind of an opposition party member.