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to more productive use. Finally, the rate of growth of our public debt is a clear signal to Canadians and foreign investors alike that government accounts are mismanaged. It takes a minimum of logic to conclude that the problem is serious.

If I have enough time, I will have more to say about the steps taken by the government to come to grips with the problem of the rapid growth of the public debt. It is a fact that only sound tax management will renew confidence in Canada and lead businessmen to invest and open up new Canadian companies, something which is absolutely necessary if we are to solve the unemployment crisis.

Unfortunately, that is not the only problem facing us today.

We have to redefine the role of government if we expect it to provide a healthier climate for economic growth and job creation. These days, people rightfully look upon the state as an intruder, an obstacle which impedes change and innovation. That is why we must reconsider the basic role of government in society, wondering as we are whether certain activities can still be justified in 1984, including among others our participation in public enterprises, regulations, tax incentives, grants to bankrupt industries. We have to ask whether all those factors might not undermine the orderly operation of the market.

Although we do have reservations about the role of government in the nation's industrial affairs, Mr. Speaker, we are still very much in favour of social programs specially designed to help the needy. Still, even those programs will have to come under scrutiny in case they might be better and more efficiently oriented and implemented. We also want the business decision-making process left to the private sector, and we want to be able to meet the needs of Canadians with a minimum of government intervention, the dire consequences of which we are all too familiar with. We want to make Canada more attractive for Canadian and foreign investors alike.

That is our plan, Mr. Speaker. We will reduce the deficit's rate of growth, we will stop getting involved in areas where the private sector can perform favourably. We will stimulate Canadian and foreign investment in this country. We have already started implementing that plan, although we have only now been in office for three months. Who would dare say the Government is in total disarray? That disarray is nowhere but in the minds of people who are accusing us.

Last month, the Government addressed the problems of the nation by announcing in the Throne Speech the upcoming changes in orientation. It reviewed Canada's economic situation. It revealed the details of a plan of action and announced the first measures intended to reduce public expenditures.

Those measures were not taken rashly, Mr. Speaker, they stem from a concerted plan of action. We have examined one by one all the existing programs. While protecting the interests of taxpayers, our goal has been to look with a fresh mind at government expenditures and identify the areas where savings were possible. That review was done in a spirit of fairness, with a view to protecting as much as possible our needy fellow citizens. Also, we have divided those actions in such a way as not to burden any particular region or economic sector.

The program review, which was aimed at reducing the gap between expenditures and revenues, allowed us to eliminate those that were no longer essential, to lower the levels of expenditures, to tighten management and to postpone or cancel certain capital projects.

Further to that review, Mr. Speaker, the Government could announce a \$4.2 billion reduction in financial requirements for 1985-86.

But the Government will not stop at that. Under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister, a task force has undertaken a more detailed review of the structure of the government programs, in order to merge and streamline them. This will result in a simpler, more understandable government that is more acceptable to Canadians, more efficient and more competent.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Government will not stop at that. It will keep on scrutinizing all federal expenditures. It will focus its efforts on current priorities and genuine requirements, to further reduce financial requirements. It will consult with the various groups in Canadian society on the whole gamut of issues it has raised in its economic renewal program.

As stated by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) in the detailed document submitted to the House, this consultation will be a flexible but in-depth process. It will not be an excuse to postpone decisions. The Government's commitment to consultation reflects the knowledge that only through the co-operation and determination of all Canadians to work together can the challenge of an economic renewal be met. That determination and that spirit do exist, I believe, Mr. Speaker. I have faith in a new departure, in the will to rebuild confidence and establish a new national consensus in order to fulfill Canada's economic potential.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions, comments. I now recognize the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria).

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the last comments of the Hon. Member and I have to admit I am somewhat confused because his statements are not consistent with those of his colleagues. For example, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) told us that he is making cuts here and there but the Hon. Member said that he is holding consultations here and there.

Considering all this, the Hon. Member could perhaps tell us whose advice was sought before the recent budget cuts and who was consulted before the cancellation of the 1986 census? I am particularly curious about this particular matter because several groups have contacted me, and I have received many phone calls and letters from ministers and other people stating that they had not been consulted.

● (1240)

In view of the fact that he seems to know otherwise . . . the Hon. Member could perhaps tell the House about such consultations, Mr. Speaker, because we have not yet had the oppor-