

The Budget

No other public administration in Canada can boast of such a record. In fact, in Ontario, my own province, program spending under the provincial Liberal administration of David Peterson rose by an annual average of 10 per cent per year. Now the NDP socialist administration of Premier Bob Rae is spending over 13 per cent at an average annual increase per year.

Further, when comparing this government's record of our annual increase in program spending of 3.9 per cent over the last seven years to that of the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister of Finance, it is interesting to note that he increased spending at 7.6 per cent or almost double our rate.

Perhaps more seriously, when the Leader of the Opposition was the President of the Treasury Board, the average annual increase in program spending then was 13.7 per cent. One need not take my word for this with respect to the Leader of the Opposition's tenure as President of the Treasury Board. Let me quote what the Auditor General of Canada had to say about his control of the government purse.

This is what the Auditor General of Canada said: "I am deeply concerned that Parliament, indeed the government, had lost or was close to losing effective control over the public purse". He went on to say: "Federal management and control in Government of Canada is grossly inadequate". That is what the Auditor General said when the Leader of the Opposition was in the position of President of the Treasury Board.

Let us also not forget that 10 years ago, inflation was running at over 10 per cent compared to 1.6 per cent as of January 1992. Ten years ago, interest rates were at 19.5 per cent compared to 8.25 per cent today.

That means for a one-year mortgage of \$75,000 in February 1992 at a rate of 8.25 per cent, there is a monthly saving of \$310 compared to the mortgage rate of 14.25 per cent as of May 1990. Imagine, however, the pain of having to renew one's mortgage 10 years ago when the Liberals were in power at 19.75 per cent compared to 8.25 per cent.

Contrary to prevalent misconceptions and myths propagated by the opposition, the number of Canadians living below the poverty line according to Statistics Canada has fallen by 570,000 since 1984, including 23,000 fewer children. After adjusting for inflation, after tax dispos-

able income has increased by \$1,263 per capita in constant 1986 dollars compared to 1984.

Rather than the doom and the gloom that we hear so much about, some of the things this government has been doing have been working very well indeed. The question then might be put: Why is the national debt continuing to grow? Why has it more than doubled, as the opposition takes such pleasure in reminding everyone during this present administration's stay in power?

Yes, the debt has doubled. In fact, the national debt has grown from \$206 billion to \$420 billion in the past seven years. Fully \$239 billion of debt is due to compound interest on the original \$206 billion of debt.

Since 1987 this administration has not contributed one single cent to the debt problem. In 1984 we ran a budgetary deficit of \$16 billion. In year two it was a deficit of \$9 billion, in year three a deficit of \$4 billion. However, since then we have had a budgetary surplus every year.

This year that surplus is to be \$12.7 billion and the surplus is projected to reach almost \$36 billion by 1996, four years from now. Then the government will finally be able to begin paying down the national debt. Then the government will no longer need to borrow to pay interest on that debt but will in fact be able to pay both the interest charges on the debt and have money left over to actually pay that debt down.

Further, as a member of the Conservative caucus on family issues, one of the highlights of the budget was the new family and child benefit program. The child benefit announced in the budget is a great improvement in the way the federal government assists families. The child benefit targets those who need it most, the low and modest to middle income families.

It combines the family allowance and tax assistance into one benefit which will be paid monthly, usually to the mother for children under 18. It will be tax-free, instead of being taxable as is the present family allowance.

For instance, let us take a husband and wife with two children whose ages are one and four. The family income is \$40,750. Under the old system, the mother would receive \$69.76 per month and the husband would pay tax on those payments minus the child tax credit of \$71 per