

I am genuinely delighted to have this opportunity to speak with you about yesterday's budget, and the role it plays within the broad and focused plan for economic renewal and national reconciliation that has been our Government's mission since September the 4th, 1984.

I would also like to talk to you about our Government's commitment to restore the economic vitality in our country. And as you know, one of the most important instruments at hand is expanding our international trade.

But first the Budget.

Yesterday my colleague, the Minister of Finance helped move this country one significant step further along the road towards the kind of economic renewal and prosperity to which our administration committed itself within two months of the election victory of September '84. Last night's budget is a clear beacon to all those who believe that economic growth, rather than runaway public spending and deficits, holds the key to the continued financing of social programs in our society.

The message conveyed by the Minister of Finance yesterday was as simple as it was serious -- Canadians can no longer afford to finance their public services along the lines pursued by previous administrations. As recent events in the international money markets clearly demonstrated, the deficits compiled by the Federal Government in the past two decades constitute a real and considerable threat to the economic well-being of our country and our fellow citizens. The Government of which I am proud to be a part has begun the long overdue process of coming to grips with this legacy of waste and irresponsibility compiled by our predecessors.

When we came to office, the Prime Minister undertook to cut the deficit, reduce government spending and boost the level of employment in Canada. In the past 16 months we have delivered on those pledges. We held the deficit for last year to our stated objective. We initiated a number of measures resulting in reductions in public expenditures and we saw the creation of 580,000 new jobs during this same period. In short, we told the people of Canada what we would endeavour to accomplish, and unlike previous Governments in this regard -- we did what we said we would do.

Yesterday the Minister of Finance continued this process of informing Canadians on the state of our public indebtedness. Quite simply, Canadians are being asked to help in financing their way out of an extremely serious situation produced by former administrations. The budget proposes one of the most significant programs of expenditure control ever undertaken by the Government of Canada. It initiates considerable reform of the taxation system and plans a 14% reduction in the current deficit. That deficit will be under the \$30 billion figure.

From the perspective of my own portfolio, that of international trade, the return to a sound fiscal environment, reform of the corporate income tax and the promotion of competitiveness and efficiency will assist us in meeting our objectives in the international marketplace.

And even though the restoration of fiscal responsibility in Canada is a priority concern of the Budget, it must be noted that a number of progressive and beneficial programs were also unveiled by the Minister of Finance. These measures include the refundable sales tax credit, the