

It also predicted that the net public debt by 1990-91 would be \$407 billion. It was slightly off. It was only \$388 billion, an increase of 131 per cent. That is the kind of increase this government brought in because of its disastrous policies of the last five years. Now it is trying to say on the one hand, the reason for the financial crisis in Canada is because of the Liberal debt we inherited. On the other hand, it says that it is now going to bring government expenditures under control.

If this bill is such a great idea today, why was it not brought in 1984 when the Minister of Finance made this famous statement in which he said that Canada was going down the tubes if it followed the policies of the previous government?

If government expenditure is so important today, why was it not even more important in 1984 when it claimed it was solving the problem of excessive government expenditure? It allowed it to increase by 69 per cent in a five-year period.

I will tell you why it is more important today. It is because this government wants to go to the people of Canada in an election campaign and say to the people that it has brought the government expenditures under control, and has passed some bill that somehow magically solves this problem.

This is so transparent and so fraudulent that it cannot bear any reasonable examination. One of the government's own supporters knows what is going on here. He knows that Canadians are being bamboozled by this process. I want to quote the hon. member for Mississauga South who knows more about finance, quite frankly, than the Minister of Finance or the previous Minister of Finance for that matter.

He has been chairman of the finance committee of this House and has a far better grip in my opinion on financial matters than any Minister of Finance this government has ever produced. What does he say? I quote from *The Ottawa Citizen* of July 29. I thank my colleague from Windsor West for his eagle eye in spotting this excellent quotation.

The article said: "The bill to limit annual increases in government spending to 3 per cent over the next five years is a charade" he said. He is especially critical of the exclusion of so-called tax expenditures or tax breaks from the CAP.

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Here is an expert in this House on finance, someone who knows more about finance than the Minister of Finance ever did, who said that this bill is a charade. Why are more members on the government side not speaking to this bill? I will tell you why. They are humiliated and embarrassed to have to defend such a completely silly piece of legislation.

Mr. Ferguson: That is why there are no ministers in the House.

Mr. Milliken: They are hiding their faces in shame at the thought of this silly legislation being discussed in this House.

Let's look at the proposal the government put forward. Initially it sent a draft to the Standing Committee on Finance for pre-study. What did the draft say? It proposed 3 per cent per year for a five-year period, for I think a maximum of 15 per cent. It is compounded so we will allow for that. Now they have revised it.

The new bill before us has changed those figures to increase the amount slightly. Why did it increase them? Presumably because it felt it could not keep its expenditures at 3 per cent. In other words, it figured out exactly how much it was likely to increase expenditures and then allowed for the cap to accommodate all their spending plans.

One can only expect the reason for the increase in the level is because there is an election coming up, and it does not want to cut back too much. We hear that the inflation rate in Canada is going to 2 per cent.

We know the government is giving its employees one per cent this year and three per cent next year. Why are we having increases in excess of three per cent? Are those figures going to hold firm? Why are we going to have increases in government expenditure in excess of three per cent if the inflation rate in Canada drops below two as we expect it will according to the most recent newspaper account? I expect we will hear that from the minister shortly.

Why are we spending more? The government says it wants to control expenditures. Its desire to control is dictated only by a desire to appear to control for the purposes of an election campaign. It is not because it genuinely believes that control of expenditures is important. It had seven years to bring government expenditures under control and it has abysmally failed.