

that the Liberal Government failed during all those years. The Conservative Government came to office in 1984, Mr. Speaker. And guess what happened. Canada is now a member of this group of the seven most industrialized countries in the world. That is what I call a vision of the future, Mr. Speaker, and that is also what I call "going international". We don't merely have a few words on paper as we used to previously, but actions have been taken, positive and specific actions.

For the last three days, we have been hearing about the one cent a litre increase on gasoline, among other things. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that even despite of some increases in price, gasoline is still cheaper than in 1984 when the Liberals were in power. And that is not all! What is even more astounding and shows how that party can be vicious in its comments and how forgetful they have become, Mr. Speaker . . . and I won't even mention the 18 cents a gallon, in 1980, those 18 cents that they doubled when they came back to power. But I just want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that for a little over 10 years the average percentage of federal taxes on a gallon or a litre of gas has ranged from 17 to 20 per cent, and this covers the period when the Liberals were in power. Yet, with our increase of one cent a litre, the tax makes up 20 per cent of the price of a litre of gas. That means, Mr. Speaker, that when the Liberals were in power, we had the same tax percentage than we have now; yet they have the gall to criticize us, with their arms thrown up in the air and monstrous outbursts, when the situation was worse when they were in office, Mr. Speaker.

You are indicating to me that my time is nearly up, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to conclude by saying that in 1984, government expenditures increased by 14 per cent each year, I repeat by as much as 14 per cent a year, Mr. Speaker. Such was the financial management of the Government before the Conservatives took over: Government expenditures were increasing by 14 per cent a year. Today, Mr. Speaker, the rate of growth has been reduced to 3.5 per cent. This is good management, this is how you should govern a country and manage public finances brilliantly and logically while taking into account, as I have already said, the needs of the Canadian people, for instance as concerns child care. What the Canadian public needs before anything else, Mr. Speaker, is a better quality of life, and for this, we need a reasonable economic growth and proper job creation.

• (1620)

[English]

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct two questions to the Hon. Member. In his speech he made it quite clear how proud he is of the Budget of the Conservative Government. I would ask him to comment on the views expressed by the Canadian Council on Social Development which includes among its members, virtually all Governments, federal, provincial and municipal, and all voluntary agencies concerned with all aspects of welfare. In its analysis of the Budget the council states there is no provision for increasing

aid to Canadian families living below the poverty line, although the number of such people is now 851,000, up from 745,000 in 1980.

I would also like the Hon. Member's comments on recent reports that 20 per cent of Canadian people are functionally illiterate and that the percentage in Quebec is higher than the national average. That means that these people, for the rest of their lives, unless steps are taken so that they can become literate, can only look forward to either being on welfare or having the most menial and poorly paid jobs. Does the Hon. Member not think that a country as wealthy as Canada should be able to find the funds to start addressing these two problems which are so glaring and so obvious to anyone who wants to look at the realities of life in Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, I shall be pleased to reply to the Hon. Member opposite. There is always room for improvement, but this Budget is part of an ongoing process. If I told you, Mr. Speaker, that this Budget is perfect and that the public financial picture is perfect, you would not believe me, but I would not say such a thing. This Budget continues what we began three and a half years ago.

The Hon. Member speaks about the poor, but as I mentioned earlier, we have increased our support for all social development programs. Additional amounts have been allocated to these programs. It is perhaps partly, even though not totally, the fault of the Socialist Member if the party now in the Opposition spent foolishly what should have been spent to help Canadians when it was in power.

Before I was elected, on September 2, 1984, the party opposite approved a few million dollars in projects which the local people did not want. The Liberals introduced the scientific research tax credit in their last Budget. That cost all Canadians, whether poor or rich, a few billion dollars. What are a few billion dollars? They knew what would happen. However, these few billion dollars simply disappeared; they were not used for any scientific research, and they are no longer available for scientific research or to increase our support to those who need it, as the Hon. Member was saying. This money is no longer available to pay the interests on the debt. We have to live with that.

If tomorrow morning the Hon. Member lends his credit card to one of his friends and for 20 years the same friend every year goes over the limit and does not make the payments, after 20 years, our good friend and colleague on the other side of this House is going to have a bill exactly similar to the debt of the Federal Government. He is going to say: I have no money left, I have to pay off that debt. When his better half, his wife is going to ask him for money, he will answer: I cannot give you any because the chum I gave my credit card to for 20 years, during all that time he charged on it amounts of money exceeding what I could earn, and I am completely fed up. This