

the normal wage growth on unemployment insurance premiums has been counted as a tax increase.

I know a little bit about numbers and how to make them say an awful lot of things. What I know is that this Government has told Canadians the truth. We have not tried to manipulate the numbers in a way that would mislead average and ordinary Canadians. Our objective is to make this country a better place for ordinary Canadians. We want people to be able to buy houses, to rent houses and to have jobs. Those are the measures that have been incorporated in our economic agenda and in two Budgets.

Let me throw in some other numbers if we are talking about numbers. Taxes in this Budget are up by perhaps 50 cents per day for average Canadians. Let us make an adjustment. Let us suppose they are a little higher than that. The purpose of a balanced Budget is to bring down interest rates. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. This is the Ottawa winter cold. I have been aggressively spreading it all over the country.

Mr. Keeper: It's those tax increases.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Choking on the Budget.

Mrs. McDougall: Those tax increases are going to help us bring down interest rates. Let us talk about the ability to buy a house and about mortgage rates. Mortgage rates on a five-year mortgage have already come down during our administration by two and a quarter points. That means on a \$50,000 mortgage a saving to the average family of \$3 per day. That is before taking into account the very real possibility that by getting control of our deficit this year and reducing our debt burden again, we will be able to bring down interest and mortgage rates even further. That is what we are talking about when we talk about fiscal responsibility, when we talk about civilized behaviour, when we talk about fairness and when we talk about balance. Those are the things that Canadians care about. Those are the things that we are introducing.

Corporate tax revenues have been spread across a broader base. By closing all those loopholes, corporations will be paying more tax, not less. Corporate taxes, as Canadians know, go up and down with profits. They are a little hard to predict, but I can tell the House that as a result of this Budget corporations will be paying more tax, not less. There is a balance between corporate and personal tax revenues.

I do not believe that this Budget or our economic policy can be described as a disaster as the Hon. Member suggested. There are 580,000 people working in Canada who were not working in September 1984. That is the best help we can give to Canadians. That is what we want to do for Canadians and their children. We want them to be able to work, to buy homes, to educate their children and to have a secure old age. If that is not a fair Budget, I do not know what is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If there are no questions or comments, we shall continue debate.

The Budget—Right Hon. J. N. Turner

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Minister is suffering from a cold, but even if she had been in better voice and better health, she would have undoubtedly choked on that Budget before she finished the speech.

I am pleased to take part in this debate on the second Budget put forward by this Government. Our Party has already put forward excellent speakers including our critic, the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount (Mr. Johnston), and the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson). They made excellent contributions, and I congratulate them sincerely.

I suspect that we will not hear the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) speak in the House on this Budget, for the second time in a row. He will be out trying to sell a lousy product across the country. I cannot remember a Prime Minister not participating in a budget speech.

● (1600)

Mr. Friesen: Oh, come on, John.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I cannot remember a Prime Minister not participating in a budget speech. Although I appreciate the courtesy of a few Ministers being here, I want to say that I had the honour of bringing down five successive Budgets in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gauthier: And they were successful Budgets, too.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I will deal with that subject in a minute, but I remained in the House every minute of the budget debate to listen to what Hon. Members on all sides of the House had to say about it. We are living in an electronic age, but there has to be some courtesy in this place. We are elected by the people of Canada. There is nothing more important for Parliament than the spending of money and the raising of money. The Minister should be here, and we should have a fuller House and a fuller Minister to listen to what we have to say. They were very few Members present to listen to the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) and there are very few Members and Ministers here to listen to the Leader of the Opposition respond to the Budget.

The Prime Minister will be travelling the country with the Minister attempting to convince Canadians that the Budget is fair. He will find, as most Canadians are coming to realize, that the Budget is not fair. We will take this Budget as the second phase of the Budget last May. Phase one was the Budget of last May and phase two is the Budget of February. Together those two Budgets constitute the greatest, cumulative, hidden, regressive tax increase in Canadian history. They attack the average Canadian family earning between \$15,000 and \$40,000 in a brutal fashion. We have reached the stage, as the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount put it, where the person between 35 years and 55 years old finds himself or herself in a position, with the added burden of tax slapped upon him or her, that it is impossible to improve one's state of