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Furthermore, if the government had not run an operating surplus over the last three years the debt would be higher today than it is now.

The members opposite do not want Canadians to know that the actions of the government itself have not added to that debt. In the future, whatever party forms the government is going to run into exactly the same strait-jacket. That is what we all have to understand on all sides of the House. It is not just a Tory problem or a Conservative debt. The government that is formed after the next election, whatever it is, will have exactly the same problems as the government today. There is no magic solution. There is no magic bullet. There is no way that we can snap our fingers and ease the problems.

The interest on the debt this year will require \$42 billion in tax revenues to finance, and about one-third of that is leaving the country in interest to foreign bond holders. In other words, we are going to be putting \$8 billion, \$9 billion or \$10 billion into the pockets of German, Japanese and American bond holders. That is about the worst economic policy that we can have because it hurts Canada's sovereignty.

A lot of the other interest is flowing from the pockets of taxpayers. Whether they are old folks, single parents or families they are all contributing tax dollars that will end up flowing into the pockets of investors who bought Government of Canada bonds. I do not see how members opposite can approve of that. We are taking money from people in all social and economic categories and putting it into the pockets of people who are generally better off, the bond holders of Canada. It is not good social policy.

The New Democrats should be on their feet screaming to end the deficit because it is making the rich richer and the poor poorer. That is what it is doing. It has to stop.

This economic situation that the Minister of Finance found himself in last Wednesday was not a happy one. It was an inevitable one. I guess we could have done what Allan MacEachen did when he was Minister of Finance, which is crank up the printing presses more, spend more than the economy is growing, and forget that today's actions have future consequences.

The finance minister of today did not take that course. He did something a lot tougher, something that is going to draw a lot of fire from the opposition, something that is going to be misinterpreted by those who continue to

deny reality and do not want to face up to the facts. The finance minister found himself in a situation in which he has to find \$42 billion this year to pay interest on the debt.

He found himself trying to craft an economic statement and guide a country in a world that is restructuring in terms of its whole economy. Low wage jobs are flowing to low wage countries. High-tech, high value-added jobs are the ones being sought by our competitors, who are also high value-added, high wage countries like Germany and Japan.

The finance minister found himself in a situation in which competitiveness and productivity are the challenges of today. He did not have to find new ways to turn on the printing presses but ways to be competitive through deregulation, sane taxes, and integrated economic policies so that Canadian companies can compete across the world.

The finance minister stood here and found himself trying to craft a budget at a time when investor confidence and consumer confidence are very weak. One of the reasons is that every day in this House of Commons members opposite stand up and give a tale of woe and doom about the economy. They do everything they can to try to accentuate the negative and they are reinforced by the media. The Official Opposition is doing a lot in this country to grind down the feelings of people about the fact that their country is one of the best in the world, as judged by almost every international agency that looks at us from afar.

As a consequence, the Minister of Finance stands in this Chamber and deals with certain realities: a drastic \$8 billion annual drop in revenues because of the recession; an unacceptably high 1.6 million people unemployed that we need to do something for; slow retail sales; this frenzy of negative news that surrounds us; the deficit rising beyond targets; the dollar under pressure because of speculation on a weak currency from a weak economy; and interest rates having to rise to defend that dollar.

Those are the realities, the economic realities, almost all of which the Minister of Finance had no control over. Yet he has to deal with them. What would the opposition do, given the circumstances that I have just described with a global recession and a debt that is cancerously growing by itself? What would the opposition do?