

Government Orders

My question deals with the fact that right up to 1984, the governing party opposite begged Canadians on their knees every election campaign to let them take over. Yet every time we talk about the economy I do not hear the members getting up and saying, well, here is how we fixed everything. What I hear is that they have a case of selective amnesia. It starts the day after the 1984 election and the only thing they can refer to is pre-1984, which is subject to a great deal of interpretation and which most Canadians are not terribly concerned about. What Canadians are concerned about is your inability to deal with the economy in a consistent and fair manner and in accordance with your words during election campaigns.

I would like to ask the hon. member exactly what type of course give in his caucus that they have such a selective memory loss, and can find nothing to explain away the problems that this country has other than to say it is somebody else's problem.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how these guys like to keep walking into this. I give them credit for leading with their jaw. They want to come here and get it right in the kisser. They say to me, selective memory, I do not think there is any Canadian who needs a selective memory to know the kind of debt these Liberals left us with.

The annual deficit has fallen from a record \$38 billion in the last year of the Liberal government to \$28 billion in 1990-91. In dollar terms, the deficit has been cut by one-fourth. In 1984 the deficit was 35 cents on every dollar. This has now fallen to 19 cents. We do not have to talk about anyone's memory. These are facts and anyone can see them in the public accounts and are available to the public.

This government has shown fiscal responsibility. We have had to make some tough decisions, limit some programs and cut some spending, but we are getting this country on its feet again. Is it working? I mentioned earlier a total of 1,604,000 jobs have been created since we came into office in 1984. Of those, 966,000 have been created for women. The unemployment rate has fallen from 11.6 per cent when the hon. member party's was in office to 7.7 per cent in February.

• (1820)

People are working in Canada. Canadians are productive now, and we do not have a government wasting their money and spending more than it brings in. The day of reckoning has come. This government is dealing with it, and we are solving the debt problem that the Liberals created.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker. I would love to answer more questions from my colleague, because it is kind of fun to straighten him out and to tell Canadians what a mess they left.

When these people talk about resignations of finance ministers, we just have to look at the record I talked about today both in terms of the legacy left by the Liberal party and the remarkable progress that has been made since 1984 by the current Minister of Finance. I think we should put a statue on Parliament Hill of this Minister of Finance.

Mr. René Soetens (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Calgary Southeast about legacies that have been left.

Our finance minister has been chastised for what he, in the minds of the opposition, has been doing. I would like to ask the member for Calgary Southeast if he would care to comment on this. In the last majority Liberal government did they not, in that year of the \$38 billion deficit, forecast something in the range of a \$33 billion deficit and were out some \$6 billion in their forecast?

In the year before that when they forecast a \$28 billion deficit, in fact it was \$33 billion. They were out substantially. If you go back through five finance ministers who they had in that last term of office, they were all big shooters and all out on their forecasts. Here we are as the new government and we have had only one finance minister. Each and every year, he has been within \$1 billion of what he forecast. Would you care to comment on that?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I think you know and certainly the people in Edmonton Northwest know that what the member for Ontario has just said is absolutely true.

I want to comment on the representation made by the hon. member for Ontario, and the accuracy of forecasting of previous Liberal finance ministers who were out \$6 billion a year in any of their forecasts. This government