

The Budget—Mr. Vincent

• (1140)

As to the funding of established programs, and strictly at that level, the increase will be smaller by one per cent. I underline the word "increase". Again, Mr. Speaker, cuts in transfers to the provinces or anywhere else are never pleasant. But Newfoundland, as any other province, is part of a country called Canada, and the major problem this country is going through at the present time is the national debt, the annual deficit.

To be able to give even more in the future to Newfoundland, Quebec or any other province, we must solve immediately the issue of a debt that will grow at an incredible, incalculable and impossible rate if nothing is done right now. That is the perspective in which the cut is made: to deal once and for all with the annual deficit as well as the national debt.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, how can the Hon. Member explain to the fishermen that this Budget is good for Canadians, as he just told us, and that we must hasten to pass it, when this Government has seen fit to cut—repeat, cut—some programs, including subagreements providing funds for the development of fisheries and forestry as well as other sectors?

The Hon. Member talked about a reduction in the growth of equalization payments. But there was a cut in the fisheries sector. The money is not in the Fisheries and Oceans budgetary forecast and we are told studies on fishing subagreements will be undertaken this year. Since there is no money, they probably won't be renewed.

Also, fishermen will have to pay more for their fuel because the rebates they were eligible for are being taken away.

How can he explain to Atlantic fishermen that this Budget is good for them, especially in the present situation with diminishing catches, companies closing entire plants, lost jobs and the decision not to renew fishing subagreements? How can he explain to the fishermen it is good for them?

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Hon. Member opposite has a gloomy view of life. He is not realistic about the present situation and the situation of fishermen as well. Fishermen have tax and economic advantages that no other group in the country has. Unfortunately, the Opposition Member does not talk about that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to always look—There are two kinds of people in life. Some will say that a glass of water is half full. The Opposition Member will say that it is half empty.

We on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, consider it half full. We approach the future positively. We do not say that the Budget does not raise taxes. We do not say that the Budget makes no cuts. We said so and explained it. But we also say why it must be done.

It must be done because for many years, the party in power, of which my colleague is a member, created for us a monster called the national debt.

Mr. Speaker, I actually managed to wake them up!

An Hon. Member: Yes indeed!

Mr. Vincent: I am glad I did. I told them yesterday evening that I would wake them up this morning, and I did.

Mr. Speaker, I will quote just one sentence:

[*English*]

There are programs that are duplications. There are programs that are wasteful. There is administration that is wasteful. There are programs that are no longer useful. There are programs that no longer serve a purpose, and I am going to cut that down.

John Turner, July 25, 1984.

[*Translation*]

At the time, Mr. Speaker, on the day he said that, the national debt totalled \$199,092 billion. That was the situation on July 25, 1984. If we do some simple arithmetic and add the interest charges on the 1984 debt and the interest charges for the last four years, we set the national debt as it is today.

We are trying to deal with your debt and your problem. You should be thanking us on your knees instead of squawking like that. You should realize this is the major problem in this country and show some support or at least more some suggestions that make sense.

An Hon. Member: That's your job!

Mr. Vincent: Yes, it is our job, and we are willing to co-operate but all you people ever do is criticize.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I pointed out, and I will explain for the benefit of the Hon. Member who is new to the House. In November 1984, the Minister of Finance tabled his economic message, and in May 1985, he brought down his Budget as he did in February 1986, February 1987 and February 1988. Five times the Opposition predicted. The result would be unemployment, rising interest rates and rising inflation. Every time they predicted the country was going down the tube. Five times! And they were wrong every time. We created 1.4