

*Government Orders*

There is something else that the hon. member who just spoke neglected to mention. He spoke about the great control the government had exercised on government expenditures. Let us take a look at revenues. In 1984-85, the year he said was such a dreadful year for Canadians, government revenues were \$70,898,000,000. In 1988-89, the last full financial year, they were \$103,981,000,000, an increase of some \$32 billion over the five years of Tory mismanagement.

That is the kind of record we are supposed to be proud of. This is a record the government says is a great one. Well, I think it is a disgraceful record and I think most Canadians agree. If the government is so great, why does it not resign, put its record on the line, and go to the people to see what they think about the record.

That \$103 billion, incidentally, was the revenue before the goods and services tax comes in. The government itself admits that the goods and services tax is going to be helpful in reducing the deficit which means it is going to produce more income than the current manufacturers' sales tax. Finally, that admission has been made. It is right in the document.

The government, through its incompetence, keeps raising taxes and spending more at an alarming rate. Spending has gone up by the same amount over the same period. Yet, the government says the reason for its inability to control expenditures and its requirement to raise taxes is all because of the previous government. Everything is blamed on the previous government. Every time we hear speeches from members on the other side, they harp back to the good old days of the Liberal government, telling us that if it was not for those profligate days everything would be coming up roses now.

Well, it was not the Liberal party in 1984 that promised to bring fiscal responsibility to Canada. It was not the Liberal party that said the deficit was going to be reduced to almost nothing within the first term of office of the government. It was the Conservative party that made those promises. It was the right hon. Prime Minister who made those promises. Of course, there is now a string of broken promises.

The Minister of State for Finance said—he did not use these words, of course—that the reason the government could not keep its promises is because of those bad old days. In fact, he knows that the reason for the problem

now is the complete inability of the Minister of Finance to manage the affairs of the country and the government. The whole cabinet is party to those decisions. I submit they are all equally to blame and they are all equally incompetent.

Another criticism we hear from the other side is that never, ever, does the opposition make suggestions on how to bring about a balanced budget. The government somehow feels it is our responsibility, as elected members of the House but sitting in opposition to the government, to provide the government with all the answers. I do not think we need to do that and I will not go into all the answers. But I will suggest that the government itself pays for its advice on how to solve its financial problems and, having paid the money, it ignores the advice.

This year, the Economic Council of Canada prepared a very significant and detailed statement called "Legacies" in the form of their twenty-sixth annual review. The Council is the primary economic advisory board, if you like, to the government. It was designed and created in the 1960s over the objections, I may say, of the Conservative party of the time. It did not think it was such a hot idea and I urge the Minister of State for Finance to look at the speeches given on those occasions by the right hon. Mr. Diefenbaker, then Leader of the Opposition. He felt it was a bad idea. I do not know exactly why, but he was not much of an economics expert himself. In fact, the only government I can recall that has managed worse than this one in this century was the one headed by the right hon. John George Diefenbaker, and Canadians expressed their views on that government in the elections of 1962 and 1963.

• (1650)

The fact is the Economic Council of Canada published this review and it contained certain information for the government. How much did the advice contained in this report cost? Well, I do not pretend this is the only publication of the Economic Council, but I checked the Estimates for last year. The total estimated budget for the Economic Council was \$9,515,000—roughly a \$10-million exercise. There are 118 people shown on the list as person-years working at the Economic Council and they produced a report. They produce more than this; I do not belittle their efforts. In fact, I suggest that this report is probably pretty good. It certainly details the problem that the Minister of Finance whined and whim-