

The Budget—Mr. Comuzzi

cut, yet with this Budget devoid of any real improvement, the debt has doubled, the deficit has increased, programs have been cut, taxes are up. Furthermore, interest rates continue to increase substantially. Despite all this, the government would have us believe, Mr. Speaker, that it has done its job over the last four years. I think not and I would like the Hon. Member from Québec-Est to comment on that.

Mr. Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I said earlier, that our approach since 1984 has brought concrete results. The measures we have taken to reduce the deficit and slow down the debt growth have helped fostering investment and employment in Canada, raising the standard of living and increasing economic security.

I am well aware that there is more to do. We must do more to be able to continue our social and cultural programs, to build and support a strong and competitive economy that will keep on creating jobs and opportunities for Canadian men and women, to give us the means to meet priorities such as job training and the protection of the environment and, of course, to improve the quality of life for Canadian men and women in general.

So, in meeting the debt challenge, this Budget is building our future instead of mortgaging it. You can be assured that I, who has young children, have no intention to pass the buck to them, to make them pay the bill for something in which they had no say and did not deserve.

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely inconceivable to hear our colleague of the Official Opposition say that the Government has added to the deficit. We know full well that the deficit stood at \$39.5 billion in 1984 and had the Liberals remained in office the deficit would now be up to \$50 billion or \$55 billion and the public debt would have gone over the \$500 billion mark.

In an attempt to set the record straight, allow me first to commend my colleague for the quality of his remarks on the Budget Speech. I would suggest that the ponderation and scope of our colleague's speech enables us to gain a better insight during the difficult times we are experiencing now and will soon be facing, Mr. Speaker.

I should like to ask my colleague whether it is a fact that, according to the claims of both Opposition Parties, regional development programs are to be reduced as will other social programs. Is it a fact that old age pensions

will not continue to increase? Is it a fact that regional expansion programs will be axed, or is the truth something else again?

Mr. Tremblay (Quebec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I think the truth is completely different.

On the contrary, we notice an increase in all areas of the budget. Where there is a slowdown, it applies to the rate of increase. When you read and read again the many documents made available to us, you see that priorities remained the same and that measures taken by our Government since September 1984 are maintained and will be completed on time, except that we have a temporary period of restlessness. We do not control interest rates as we would like to, but be assured that the actions we are taking now will enable us to position ourselves very firmly and much more aggressively as early as 1993-94, when our budget program is completely balanced.

[English]

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, allow me first to preface my remarks with some general observations about this Budget. The Government has burdened Canadians with \$3.3 billion in additional taxes which will be raised on the backs of Canadians right across this land.

On March 6 the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) promised this House that they would cut spending and that they would not raise taxes as tax levels in Canada were already too high. He went on to promise Canadians that the deficit would be reduced by cutting spending, not by raising taxes.

On November 29, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) told us that Canadians paid a pretty penny for their government services. They feel that they pay quite enough already, yet since 1984 taxes paid by individual Canadians increased by \$26.7 billion while taxes paid by corporations increased by only \$3.4 billion. In our estimation this is very unfair.

When the Government took office in 1984 the public debt was \$176.8 billion. Between 1984 and the end of this fiscal year that debt will rise to \$352 billion. The Government has doubled the debt of this country in the five short years that it has been in office. What does this mean? It means that in the past 117 years of Canadian history since Confederation, up to 1984, the national