

The Budget

three years. It does not say a word about the consequences to a number of issues, the consequences to the job creation program, the consequences to social programs, the consequences to the one million children reported to be living in poverty in this country.

I wonder if the minister has any ideas or thoughts that would debilitate the government's ability to function adequately and at the level the budget suggests in the light of \$100 billion to the debt over the next three years.

What is the danger, if any, of the debt?

Mr. MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Crowfoot.

Our approach quite honestly would be a little different than his approach. If we were to balance the books which are out of line the way the hon. member has proposed we would not have UI changes. We would have a collapse of our social system.

• (1705)

The area that I represent would be devastated. What we have done as a government has changed the direction of government. We will have a deficit of under \$40 billion, which is not great but we are on the road to recovery.

If we were to take the path of balancing the books, the people that I represent would have nothing. This government is a compassionate government which cares about people. We have to get our books in order. We are on the path to putting our books in order but we are not going to devastate the Canadians who need our assistance on the way.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I am still not clear about a few things regarding this budget. As we know, the government is not always the most efficient provider when it comes to delivering certain types of services. Take veterans' homes for example. Could someone tell us how much it costs to operate these homes as opposed to having comparable services provided by hospitals in another sector? Could a comparison be made? I think that the difference in costs would be in the tens of thousands of dollars. I would welcome comments on that.

[English]

Hon. MacAulay: I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question. The Department of Veterans Affairs was heavily involved in hospitals over the last number of years. We now have two. One is Sainte-Anne's, as the member is well aware, and one is in western Canada. I do not have the figures before me as to the costs. The number one priority of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to make sure that the veteran gets the proper treatment.

We deal with provincial governments in order to move our institutions from the Department of Veterans Affairs to provincial jurisdiction. We have two hospitals left and we are in discussions with these hospitals as well in order to bring them from the Department of Veterans Affairs to provincial authority.

The Department of Veterans Affairs always makes sure that the veteran gets the best treatment possible. In this country, as my hon. friend is well aware, we take great pride in being able to say that we are number one in providing for our veterans. I can assure the member we are going to remain being number one as a nation providing for our veterans.

Ms. Paddy Torsney (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to be speaking during International Women's Week as the member of Parliament for Burlington, Ontario. Not only am I excited about representing my home town in the House of Commons, but I feel a deep sense of loyalty and purpose toward the job I have been elected to do.

The people of Burlington have given me the opportunity to grow and learn alongside them, and I welcome the challenge and the privilege. Already the rewards have been great and I look forward to combining the unparalleled energy of the populace of Burlington with my own enthusiasm.

It is very important to me that I thank not only my family and friends, without whose help I would not be here, but also the people of Burlington who have graciously given me their support, ideas and ultimately their confidence. Many people worked very hard to see me elected to this House. My parents and my family have supported me wholeheartedly in what seems in hindsight to have been a very fast campaign but what during the summer seemed endless at times.

My parents and my sister came to Canada in 1957 from Ireland and my parents inspired in each of their children commitment in and loyalty to this country, their chosen nation. They taught us the value of hard work and the importance of volunteering and giving something back to our community. I thank them for inspiring in me this deep sense of commitment I feel and for giving me the genes and the energy to fulfil that sense of duty.

[Translation]

Now, it is my duty to show the people of Burlington that I am worthy of the trust they have put in me. We must create a partnership with them to share our knowledge and our vision of Canada. I plan to work hand in hand with the people of Burlington to make Canada a better and better place to be.

• (1710)

I cannot do this on my own, no more than I can work alone in this House. We must all join hands and work together. In the daily performance of my duties as member of Parliament, I have noticed how different my riding was from my colleagues'