

*The Budget—Mr. Maltais*

[English]

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the sharp criticism the Parliamentary Secretary is making, is it not fair for this House and the Canadian public generally to take it as being critical of his Government, because after all it has been in power for 15 years and if we are not processing materials as much as we should be, surely the Government has to accept the responsibility for this sad performance? Is it fair to interpret his remarks as being most critical of his Government?

[Translation]

**Mr. Maltais:** Without seeking to be formally critical, Mr. Speaker, I fully endorse what has been done by the Liberal Party for many years. There is much to do to change all that.

[English]

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering, though, in saying "there is much to do to change all that", could the Hon. Member indicate whether he has any slight reservation concerning his Government when we find that not only did employment fall but Canada had the worst growth of any of the 24 member states of OECD last year? Does he not feel that is a pretty bad reflection on the Government he has chosen to support?

[Translation]

**Mr. Maltais:** Mr. Speaker, may I say simply that the Government is doing an outstanding job and will have to keep up its good work. I am thinking about Canada which will need our assistance very soon if we are to make sure that we keep those highly skilled jobs in high technology. Our Government has done a lot for Bombardier to help that company find new markets in New York, and yet the Opposition spoke up against that formula. But we went ahead anyway. de Havilland on the outskirts of Toronto has been a leader in the field of aviation. What I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that there are lots of things to do. What has been accomplished in the past was done in the context of those years, and I think that the private sector also has an important role to play. It will have to take the lead in certain sectors rather than forever expecting Government support.

[English]

**Mr. Evans:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens) referred to how bad the job creation rate was in 1980. Would the Parliamentary Secretary not agree that, if you look at the entire decade of the 1970s, Canada created jobs at twice the rate of any of the nations described by the Hon. Member for York-Peel? He has pointed out one year as being such a disaster when for the decade prior Canada had created jobs at twice the rate of any of those countries he has described. Would the Parliamentary Secretary not agree with that point?

● (1730)

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am pleased to give the Hon. Member the figures. For 1980 our

employment record was up by 2.8 per cent. In 1979 it went up by 4 per cent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** That is hardly a point of order.

[Translation]

The question was put to the Parliamentary Secretary, but I must inform Hon. Members that the time allocated for the question period has ended.

[English]

**Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West):** Mr. Speaker, let me begin my remarks on the budget presented to the House of Commons by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) on April 19, 1983, by reviewing a very basic economic principle. The purpose of a budget is to relate expenditures to revenue, but the object of the exercise is to bring the estimate of expenditures and the estimate of revenue into balance.

Due to the financial policies of the federal Government over the past decade or more, we have virtually abandoned the concept of a balanced budget and substituted instead the notion that a manageable deficit is acceptable. For this reason, the first question that we should ask in any examination of a national budget must be: do the proposed expenditures exceed the anticipated revenue beyond the level that can be described as a manageable deficit?

The Minister of Finance, like his predecessor, has clearly endorsed the abandonment of any attempt to balance the budget because he has projected a deficit of \$31.3 billion with expenditures of approximately \$90 billion and revenues just under \$60 billion. We must ask this question: is \$31.3 billion a manageable deficit? Can such an enormous amount be justified in terms of the current and future economic trends?

Let me try to explain what this means. In terms of the immediate cost to working Canadians, if they are required to meet that budgetary deficit in this fiscal year, it would be \$3,100. If you ask, can the taxpayers of Canada individually afford to spend and contribute \$3,100 or more in addition to the money they are already paying in taxes of all kinds, I am sure the answer would be, very quickly, no.

We are placing a burden on the taxpayers that they cannot live with on a current basis. We must also consider that the deficit we will incur must be added to the accumulated national debt, which will now rise to approximately \$168 billion. If that debt load is spread among working Canadians, those who pay taxes, it burdens them as individuals with a debt of approximately \$16,000. That would be in addition to all their other debts which include that part of the provincial debt load that they share in respect of the Province in which they reside. In the case of Nova Scotia, it is approximately \$5,000 per person.

We have these enormous figures. The result is that over one out of every four revenue dollars received by the Government of Canada is immediately expended on interest charges with respect to the accumulated debt. It is becoming virtually impossible to break out of this cycle of enormous expenditures