

The Budget—Mr. G. Wilson

the House do not claim to have a monopoly on all these matters. We want to work constructively. I believe that this deficit interest problem is of sufficient concern that Members on all sides should be joining together in an harmonious atmosphere in an effort to try to cope with it.

• (1720)

We cannot long continue to mortgage tomorrow in order to pay for today and, indeed, to pay for yesterday. That is why the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) said that this Budget is about building for the future not borrowing from it.

The Budget deals with the major obstacle to our future progress, our future growth and that is the growing debt. The Budget attacks that obstacle. The measures are tough because they are absolutely necessary and absolutely required. No one on this side takes any great delight in increasing taxes or in reducing programs, but the fact is that it is the carelessness, the over-spending, the profligacy of those who went before us which have contributed in large measure to this problem. We have to face it today. It is real. It is not an illusion. It is not going to go away on its own. It has to be faced and faced now. A failure to do so now would be to abdicate our responsibility to those who come after us. We will leave our children, I suggest, with a major and very real crisis.

In conclusion, I want to say that I believe that the Minister of Finance has crafted a Budget that faces the debt challenge and will help to protect Canada's future. It asks everyone to play a part so that everyone may ultimately benefit in the years ahead. It is about our future. Its success depends on the commitment and understanding of all Canadians.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Hon. Member from Swift Current say that all of the country should be more involved in dealing with the country's deficit and I believe that most of the country is.

Prior to the Budget and prior to most budgets, we saw announcements and pronouncements by the business community and the lobby groups which represent the business interests saying that the deficit had to be dealt with, so I presume that that particular group in our society is prepared to take part in deficit reduction.

I would remind the Member of something that I reminded one of his colleagues a few moments ago, a study that was recently completed by John Orr in which he goes back to the taxes paid by the corporate sector and individuals in the 1950s. Seventy-five per cent of the Government revenues were raised by income tax at that date. The two sectors paid approximately the same amount of money.

If we were to carry that same regime of the corporate tax take being equivalent to the take from individuals, Mr. Orr estimates that we would have produced under this Budget an \$18.5 billion surplus. Instead, the Minister and his Government have chosen to go with a \$30 billion point something deficit. Given that the business community has been one of the loudest proponents of doing away with the deficit, can the Member explain why his Government and why the Minister of Finance did not take them at their word and begin placing the same level of taxation on the business community and the corporate community that they were paying back in the 1950s when deficits were not a problem?

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to the observations of the Member from Mackenzie.

I have not examined the study to which he is referring, but times have changed since the 1950s. The population of this country, I suspect, has virtually doubled. There are many, many more individual Canadian taxpayers. I suggest to you that the corporate sector is carrying roughly a 50 per cent tax rate. I know of no individual or corporation in this country that is making money that does not pay tax with the exception—and I want to add this exception because I know of the Hon. Member's fixation—of these 60,000 or 80,000 corporations which are "profitable" and which pay no tax.

The Hon. Member opposite, of course, knows full well that 95 per cent or more of those corporations he is talking about are individual Canadian small business people and farmers. The reason they may be profitable on one line of their tax return but not paying income tax in a particular year is because they are perfectly entitled to carry forward losses from previous years to offset the income in the year of reporting. He knows also that another reason is because of the business investment tax