

S. O. 31

The Budget contains a comprehensive program for expenditure reduction, designed to deal directly with the debt problem and to make it possible to pursue major initiatives that will enable the Canadian economy to produce more jobs, offer more opportunities and raise the standard of living of Canadians.

Thanks to these budgetary measures, by 1993 the deficit will have declined to \$15 billion, less than half its present level.

It was incumbent on the Canadian Government to take such measures so as not to leave a legacy of debt to future generations.

The solution is obvious: We must start paying today, to avoid suffering tomorrow, and that is what we are doing as responsible managers.

Canadians are responsible people, and I am convinced they will support the Government's decision and will congratulate the Government on having the courage and insight to ensure the future prosperity of this country for generations to come.

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[English]

THE BUDGET

CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, during the past 24 hours we have witnessed an unprecedented failure on the part of a Minister of Finance in the exercise of his responsibilities to this Parliament and to the people of Canada. Never in the history of parliamentary democracy has such a complete disclosure of a Budget occurred. The issue here is at the heart of the parliamentary system. The issue here is the integrity of the parliamentary system itself. It is the duty of the Finance Minister to protect that integrity.

The Minister does not seem to understand that this leak may have led to an unfair advantage being gained by some investors at the expense of all Canadians.

There has been a breach of security at the Department of Finance. The Minister is responsible for that Department. In view of the fact that this Minister has demonstrated in the last few hours that he is not prepared to accept his responsibilities, it is therefore a must for the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) to ask for, receive and accept the resignation of the Finance Minister (Mr. Wilson).

THE BUDGET

SUPPORT FOR MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement that is being echoed throughout the nation today. That is that our present Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) is the best Minister of Finance this country has had—

Some Hon. Members: Right on.

Mr. Thompson: —in the last 50 years.

He has made tough decisions, hard decisions, but decisions that had to be made for the good of all Canadians. The Opposition Parties, for purely partisan reasons, are now demanding the resignation of the Minister of Finance.

I would like to read a quotation from an article in this morning's newspaper, and I quote: "Should the Minister resign because others broke the law?" They answer that question by another quotation: "This is no time for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) to resign". Canadians from coast to coast are saying the same thing. They have confidence in this Minister and confidence in this Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE BUDGET

ABSTRACTS OF BUDGET PRESENTED BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Ross Harvey (Edmonton East): It has been alleged that the privileges of this House have been breached. I do not doubt it.

The Fifth Edition of Beauchesne's notes, at Citation 79:

The House maintains sole control over documents in its possession. The public may see papers which have been tabled in the House.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) said this morning that he sent copies of his entire Budget package to the Clerk, for the Speaker, before his television show last night. The minute the Clerk received those papers, they became documents in the possession of the House, but had not yet been tabled. They still have not been tabled. Yet the Minister made them public.