

*The Budget*

redistribution program from the taxpayers to those individuals who can afford to buy the Government of Canada securities. This is obviously a type of income redistribution that no one in the country wants. If this process were allowed to continue we would see the government merely taking tax dollars from its citizens and repaying it to individuals who can afford the securities. We would not be able to fund the programs which Canadians want and we would not be able to provide any new programs such as those for the environment, child care, or any other area. The only way continue to attack this problem is through expenditure reduction. The budget tabled by the finance minister is aimed at achieving these goals. It reflects what is necessary in Canada today, living within our means. We cannot continue to spend money we do not have.

These expenditure reductions are being shared by all individuals in Canada. This causes difficulties for people everywhere. The easy course would be simply to continue spending and as a result increase the annual deficit and the national debt and put the day of reckoning on the backs of our children. I do not want to leave that legacy to my children. It is difficult, but I was not elected to be representative of convenience, supporting only those policies that are currently popular and easy. We have to look to the future and ensure that it is a bright one, not clouded by debt inherited by these children from their parents, with the added responsibility of supporting their parents as well. It is incumbent upon the government to take a leadership role and follow a course of action that is responsible both to the people we represent and to future Canadians.

The expenditure control plan outlined in the budget is designed to spare those individuals who personally cannot afford to see transfers reduced. Examples are old age pensions, spouses' allowance pensions and the unemployment insurance program which are exempt. Also exempted are the equalization program and Canada Assistance Program transfers to those provinces receiving equalization. There has also been a freeze in EPF funding. The provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta are being asked to shoulder a larger proportion of the expenditure reductions at the present time because of their more prosperous positions. Ontario must bear its share of the load because it stands to benefit greatly from a healthier national economy.

Ontario has a great responsibility within Confederation. The debt is a national problem and the country is counting on Ontario to help with its share of this burden.

Since the government took office it has been totally committed to being responsible with spending from the public purse. In that light, it is quite frustrating to see Ontario increase its spending in the last five years by close to 10 per cent per year and increase its public service by over 7,000 individuals, while the federal government has held its own spending to about 3.6 per cent per year over the same period and reduced its Public Service by 12,000 person-years to levels equal to those of the 1970s.

As I mentioned previously, the federal government is paying 35 cents of every revenue dollar just to cover the debt charges.

Critics have said that the freezing of the EPF funding will have a negative impact on the areas of health care and post-secondary education. It is interesting to note, however, there have been no conditions attached to this funding since 1977. The province is free to allocate the money in any manner it wishes. It cannot be said that it goes directly to health care or to post-secondary education when one realizes that the spending of the Government of Ontario increased at the rate of 10 per cent per year. I am sure that they will not have to increase their taxes or increase their deposition, but they can follow the lead of the federal government and cut their expenditures and reallocate their priorities in order that health care and post-secondary education receive the commitment that it should.

The other important fact for Ontario residents is that no new taxes have been proposed in this budget. My constituents have been quite clear in their expectations that expenditure reductions be undertaken and that taxes are not to be increased. The Minister of Finance has definitely listened to the people.

The overriding concern in the country today is the deficit and the national debt. Some people say that the government is preoccupied with this problem and they want to return to the easier, more comfortable days when the government simply ignored the matter and continued its spending and put off the day of reckoning to another generation. This is the easy way out. We cannot return to those policies without inflicting a great deal of damage on the country. This budget illustrates that this government is prepared to stay the course, to see the reduction of the deficit and the ultimate repay-