

Government Orders

done anything else, that debt would have grown to \$320 billion today, simply compounding the disgraceful economic performance of 15 years of Liberal governments.

I might just leave it at that point. I would be delighted to answer any questions that the Liberal research establishment can come up with if one of the members would like to read one of them to me.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that what he says is inaccurate.

As I started to say in my speech, although unfortunately I ran out of time, there is a litany of problems with this government's financial management. I could not get to this part of it when I was cut off earlier, so perhaps I can refresh the hon. member's memory now.

"A New Direction for Canada: An Agenda for Economic Renewal"—I daresay the hon. member does not have a copy of this—was the title of this gobbledegook that the Minister of Finance tabled in the House on November 8, 1984. It was shortly after the election, the hon. member will recall, and this was supposed to tell us about what the Tory government was going to do for Canadians.

It stated that if it left existing policies in place, certain things would be just absolutely dreadful. The government said that by 1990-91 the federal deficit would reach \$37.3 billion if it did not do anything about it. It is forecast at \$28 billion. With interest rates going the way they have been, we know it is going to be a bit more than that. It will be very close to the \$37 billion that was predicted if it did nothing.

It has done stuff. The government has hiked taxes 31 times. It also promised that it would bring spending under control in its fight against the deficit. We know that program spending has increased substantially, 4.6 per cent in 1986-87, 7.6 per cent in 1987-88, 3.1 per cent in 1988-89. This year it is supposed to go up—

Mr. Richardson: It didn't go up this year.

Mr. Milliken: Yes. Program expenditures. It is ignoring all the increases in the expending on the debt. In addition, the prediction was that program spending would reach \$103 billion, under the *status quo* budget, by 1990-91. This is what the Minister of Finance said would be so dreadful, so absolutely frightful in 1984. Yet,

according to the government's plan, spending is going to be \$109 billion. How did it get so much higher?

This was supposed to be a worst case scenario if the government did nothing. It has done something. It has botched up, that is what it has done. The government has hiked taxes. It has taxed Canadians to the hilt and it still has not managed to do anything to bring government expenditures under control.

In addition, the government predicted that government revenue under this worst case scenario, if nothing was done, would get to \$100 billion by 1990-91. According to the current plan, it is going to be \$120 billion. What happened? This was a worst case scenario. In fact, everything is worse than predicted. Why? Because the Minister of Finance, I suggest, is incompetent. He should resign, get out, and let someone else run the administration of the country. Does the hon. member not agree with that?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to constrain my laughter at the humourist from the Liberal Party. He has the audacity to stand up in this House and speak to all Canadians about the alleged incompetence of this finance minister. The Liberal party finance minister who later became leader of the Liberal party and very briefly Prime Minister of Canada had increased expenditures 24 per cent from one year to the next. Then he stands up and asks for the resignation of the present Minister of Finance and criticizes him for having a budget increase this year of 3.1 per cent. It is on the record.

Mr. Speaker, you have just heard him criticize our finance minister for having a 3.1 per cent increase. We hear this from the people who brought us average increases of 17.9 per cent for five years, 10 per cent increases for the next five years and for the last five years of their government, annual increases in government expenditures of 14.1 per cent. Yet he has the audacity to stand up in this House and ask for the resignation of a finance minister who has been able to keep program expenditures to a rate this year of 3.1 per cent. I will leave it to Canadians to decide who is humorous and who is going to get this economy back on its feet and Canadians working again.

Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for Calgary Southeast for his presentation today. I listened with a great deal of bemusement to his remarks.