

The Budget—Mr. Stevens

before the Prime Minister took office. On a per capita basis, government spending this year will amount to \$3,175 for every man, woman and child in Canada, compared to only \$549 per capita in the 1967-68 period.

Many methods could be used to show the true impact of what the government's spending, which is virtually out of control, has led us into. It has very dramatically sopped up the available investment money that would normally be routed into various plant expansions and business investments which in turn, would create jobs for Canadians. This money has now gone into relatively nonproductive activities.

Mr. Kristiansen: You mean things like private takeovers.

Mr. Stevens: My socialistic friends want to get into the act. They ask about private takeovers. Perhaps they are forgetting that the parent of the takeover craze was their own prize Crown corporation, Petro-Canada. In one fell swoop it laid out \$1.4 billion U.S. for Petro-Canada. On an after tax basis, that money alone cost the Canadian taxpayers \$70 million. That could be regarded as part of the almost \$20 billion deficit in the budget now before us.

I almost hope that the socialists to our left will keep putting in these little comments because I think they so neatly substantiate my point. It was they, in effect, who set these poor critters up and left them carrying a very, very dangerous piece of baggage, namely, an economy and budgetary fiscal position that is virtually out of control.

● (2030)

When I say that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is only relevant to remember that not only were we presented with a budget last night, but we were presented with one year's forecast of what the picture ahead of us looks like, namely the 1982-83 period, and nothing more. We were not given the benefit of seeing fiscal year 1984 or fiscal year 1985. On inquiry I found the reason we were not given the benefit of that information to see what lies in store if this government, heaven forbid, should continue in power is that they do not know. The government brought in a budget last night which literally does not project the ongoing expenditure-revenue figures beyond fiscal 1983. That leads me to comment on the fact that this budget was thrown together in the last four weeks, and I think we have to ask ourselves what triggered it. We were assured in the November, 1981, budget that they had the solution, all was in place and the government was going to lower inflation and basically get our economy turned around. So what triggered this sudden panic so that within four weeks the government felt it necessary to bring in the budget last night in a half-baked form? I ask that, Mr. Speaker, because I think the government of the day, irrespective of whether it is Conservative or Liberal, has to control expenditures, not in an immediate sense but in the long term. If there is to be a meaningful reduction in government spending you have to start looking at not just the present 12-month period, but the spending two, three, four or five years down the road. For example, I can give you figures of what our spending levels would have been had

we been able to stay in power and maintain those levels. By 1981-82, for example, the total projected spending under the Clark government was to be \$61.5 billion. It turned out to be under this government \$67.5 billion, almost \$6 billion more than our projections when we were in power. But when we shift into the present fiscal year, 1982-83, we find that the November budget projected expenditures this year to be roughly \$75.5 billion. Our spending for that same period was to be \$67.218 billion. However, last night we found that \$75 billion had moved up to \$78.1 billion, a jump of almost \$3 billion in federal government spending between last November and last night.

The reason I stress this, sir, and you are faster in arithmetic than I am, but you can see that with our expenditure level at \$67 billion and the present government spending level at \$78.1 billion, there is a difference of over \$10 billion. That, Mr. Speaker, is part of the dilemma we are now faced with.

This government, Mr. Speaker, because it did not care to cut costs and try to run a tight ship as we proposed to do, has now subjected the nation to a \$10 billion expenditure this year that we would not have run into. The net effect of the lack of confidence which has arisen from coast to coast is that production activities, the gross national product as it is sometimes referred to, has gone negative, and not only have we these higher expenditures but revenue has started to fall off. The net result is that while we anticipated our financial requirements to be \$5.6 billion, we now find that the financial requirements of this government are \$17 billion. There is the \$10 billion difference, and it is simply overspending by this government compared to the Crosbie-Clark spending program which was brought in in December, 1979.

We all recall, Mr. Speaker, what happened. Absolutely horrified by the word "restraint" and a government which was trying to run a responsible fiscal and monetary position, the socialists moved a motion of no confidence in our spending program. Of course, always eager to get back into power for their own reasons, the Liberals supported the socialists, and the net result was the election which led to the return of the Trudeau Liberal government. I mention this, Mr. Speaker, because surely that is part of the substantiation which is needed when I say we should not just criticize the present government for the dilemma we are in. The truth is that it was a joint effort on the part of the socialists to my left and the near-socialists in front of us, the Trudeau Liberals.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: You went to the public, they voted you out, and you still bleed about it.

Mr. Epp: You guys are pretty sensitive tonight.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, any time my friend to the left wants to go to the public, I say, let us go to the public and have an election.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!