

Canadian because our computer bank at the Department of National Health and Welfare contains a list of almost 18 million Canadians. My Department deals with almost every Canadian.

The Hon. Member may think that I sound like the Minister of Finance, but I say to him that I want more programs, just as the former Minister of National Health wanted more programs. I want more for spouses. I am pleased that the Government is introducing Bill C-26. I am pleased that the disability change was made in the Budget and that another 120,000 Canadian families who are looking after disabled members will get an extra benefit. I am pleased that we have been able to maintain the indexing on the basis of the Budget.

However, I suggest to the Hon. Member that Canadians must make choices, and that the difficult decisions that this Minister, the Government and Members of the House must make is whether our society can continue to increase the 25 per cent of our expenditures which now go to service the debt. Can we increase that amount *ad infinitum*, or must we make the decision to turn that deficit around and to allow future generations of Canadians the opportunity to have jobs and the ability to pay for services? While there is no social contract in a social welfare state, there is the concept of intergenerational responsibility.

The Hon. Member, myself and all Canadians who are in the workforce have a responsibility to pay our taxes for those who are over the age of 65 and who had worked when salaries and incomes were generally lower. I gladly accept that responsibility as a Canadian and I believe all Canadians accept that responsibility.

However, I suggest to the Hon. Member that there must be a balance. If this process continued, in years to come I would not sound like a Minister of Finance but, rather, like a Minister of National Health and Welfare who would be pleading for revenues which I know would not be available to maintain the programs which existed. That is what I and my successors would be pleading for, but there would not be that revenue. That was the option I had to consider and that is why I made this choice.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The period of questions and comments has expired. Resuming debate.

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, frankly, I listened with some astonishment to the plea by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) for Canadians to restrain themselves. He called particularly upon senior Canadians and those currently living below the poverty line to tighten their belts in order to pay for intergenerational transfers.

His Government has had a litany of bloated spending that would cause any taxpayer to shudder. The Government sanctimoniously pleads with Canadian taxpayers to tighten their belts. However, let us consider what the Government has done in its first eight months in office. One of the first actions taken by the chiefs of staff was to double ministerial staffs. The total cost to taxpayers of Canada for this was \$15 million. There

were 54 VIP flights in the first 45 days in office, which cost \$345,000.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare is telling senior citizens who are currently living below the poverty line to give more. Meanwhile, his Party shells out money for designer Christmas trees. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) spent \$24,000 to fly the November economic statement to the Premiers. Presumably he has not learned of the value of Canada Post, and so had to spend \$24,000 to send the economic statement to the Premiers.

The First Ministers' Conference in Regina cost the Canadian taxpayers \$500,000 under the flag of the Government and the presidential seal of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's budget alone, which increased by 57 per cent, cost Canadian taxpayers a further \$2.6 million. Presumably, Conservatives had to make sure that all their carpets were blue because renovations to Tory offices amounted to \$131,158. The total price tag for those few changes, excluding the Marcel Masse trip from Ottawa to Vancouver for \$19,000; the Harvey Andre \$12,600 flight from Ottawa to Saskatoon; the Pat Carney Ottawa to Calgary to Vancouver trip for \$17,456; and the Marcel Masse trip from Ottawa to Algeria to Greece for \$57,000.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I ask the Hon. Member to refer to Ministers by their portfolios.

**Ms. Copps:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The trip of the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) from Ottawa to Algeria to Greece and back cost the Canadian taxpayer \$57,000. The total cost to Canadian taxpayers for renovations and bloated office staffs was some \$54,921,508.

**Mr. Andre:** A fraction of what Lloyd Axworthy spent on his office.

**Ms. Copps:** I realize that it is painful for the Government to hear the facts. The Minister of National Health and Welfare stands in his place and not only breaks his word but the word of the Prime Minister to the Canadian people. He pleads with senior citizens to bear the brunt of deficit reduction. He is calling upon senior citizens who are currently living below the poverty level in this country to allow their budgets to be reduced by \$30 on a monthly basis and to make payments so that his Government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney), can pay a further \$2 billion in tax dollars to the multinational oil companies.

If the Minister of National Health and Welfare is truly serious about calling upon all Canadians to share in the sacrifice, he would not have joined with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in an absolute tax giveaway to the multinational oil companies, which is being paid directly from the pockets of our poorest in the country. It is hypocritical of the Government to call upon seniors to make those sacrifices when that Party promised during the election campaign that no matter what cuts or changes were made, they