

EXPENDITURES BY TREASURY BOARD AS A RESULT OF THE BUDGET

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board, who has revelled in his new nickname, "the slasher", which he thought he earned stemming from his bravado about indiscriminate cutting of people and expenses.

Mr. MacEachen: He slashed himself in committee: the "self-slasher."

Mr. Andras: Since the disclosure last night it is evident that he has accepted expenditure increases of 10 per cent per year, greater than in the past three years; expenditure increases from \$48 billion to \$78 billion in five years, an increase of 60 per cent in those five years; and since in the exposé—and that is what it is—the so-called cash deficit reduction stems, not from expenditure restraint but from increased taxes and an accidental accrual of pension funds, how can the President of the Treasury Board accept the total loss of his credibility, and what is left for him to slash but his own throat?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the hon. member that if he has a knife available, he had better start slashing his own throat after I give him the answer. I cannot get over the gall of the hon. member in standing up and asking that question. He seems not to have read the budget of last night, which made it clear that there is a negative real growth in expenditure after inflation in the figures revealed by my colleague, the Minister of Finance.

● (1450)

Certainly, even the hon. member must know that, based on the figures we revealed last July—which were simply their figures—the figures released last night indicate we are going to narrow the deficit in Canada between now and fiscal 1983 by over \$17 billion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: Raising taxes.

Mr. Stevens: I think the former president of the treasury board and the immediate past president of the treasury board should get up and apologize to this House for not supporting—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DEFICIT FORECAST IN BUDGET

Mr. Arthur Phillips (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my question of the Prime Minister, because earlier the Prime Minister said that one of the main objectives of this budget was to slash the deficit. The hon. minister who just spoke named some figures regarding slashing the deficit,

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and the people of Canada are being asked to make considerable sacrifices to this end.

My question is a very simple one: Why is it that in the government's own figures, at page 21, the deficit is shown—that is, the excess of expenditures over revenues—as dropping only from \$11 billion in the current year to \$9 billion five years from now?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if hon. gentlemen will be patient, the reason is this: that is a tremendous decrease, in view of the anticipated inflation, in view of the tremendous interest cost expenses which we cannot control, the \$1.7 billion increase in interest expenses—due to the profligacy of the last government—that we are going to have next year in our budget, and in view of the fact that it takes two or three years to get that under control. This is going to be a magnificent achievement. With financial requirements reduced from \$10 billion to \$4.5 billion in the same time-period, that is a tremendous achievement.

EXCISE TAX ON FARM FUELS—COST TO FARMERS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question also goes to the excited Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that last night the minister increased the price of fuel for farmers by some 15 cents a gallon and that there will be a future increase of \$4 per barrel coming in 1980—and this is on top of interest rate increases all year long—I would like to ask the minister whether he can tell the House how many hundreds of millions of dollars increase in tax this will mean for farmers. Does he have those figures for the House today?

Second, while he is on his feet, can he tell us why he will not rebate this increase to farmers, since fuel is a necessity, not a luxury, in the production of food?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have never yet seen an NDP member who could excite me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: With one exception, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: I think the hon. member should look on the positive side. With this impetus to conservation, we are going to save the importation of 100 million barrels of oil by 1985. We are going to save \$2.5 billion of current prices in our deficit and our current account. That is going to help the farmers of Canada; that is going to help all the people of Canada; that is going to give them a future; and that is going to make us a strong country. That is what he should remember.

CONCERN OF FISHERIES COUNCIL OVER INCREASE IN EXCISE TAX ON FUEL

Mr. Roger Simmons (Burin-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my good friend from Newfoundland, now