

opment index, as the second best country in the world in which to live. That is based on things such as how we care for our children, how we educate ourselves, how we deal with the environment, how we treat the sick, the aged, and the disabled. All of those things are taken into consideration. Canada stands second only to Japan in that area and we should all be proud of it.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Madam Speaker, we still have a million children living in poverty in this country and perhaps the minister could explain that.

[*Translation*]

If we consider recent statements by ministers, it is obvious this government has no inkling of the poverty of Canadians and of the children of this nation. Three times, food banks in Montreal asked the Prime Minister to come and visit them, and three times he refused. I will ask the Deputy Prime Minister and his colleagues once more: Will they promise to visit food banks and shelters for the homeless to see for themselves the kind of impact their fiscal policies are having?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I indicated that \$7.5 billion has been spent by the federal government on these kinds of programs.

I also indicated in the House on previous occasions that with respect to transfers to provinces, which include support for welfare programs, for health and for education, have risen from a figure of \$25.6 billion in 1984-85 to a figure of \$38.1 billion in 1992-93. Madam Speaker, that is a \$12.5 billion increase over that period and we have done that at a time when we were under very, very strong fiscal pressures.

The hon. member says well, what about inflation. I ask the hon. member: who does he want to tax and at what amount, to provide this additional assistance. It is one thing to stand up in the House and ask for the expenditure of money. It is another thing to say where he will get the money and how he will tax it and who he is going to tax to improve this. If he could give us that kind of information then I would be pleased to take it into consideration.

Oral Questions

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Just over a year ago, on October 12, 1990, the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

We have induced a slowdown. Mr. Wilson said as much in his budget of February. Look at the budget. It is clear as spring water.

Yesterday the Minister of Finance admitted that the budget forecasts were all wrong and unemployment will be much higher this winter than predicted.

An hon. member: Shame, shame.

Mr. Chrétien: So it is very clear. I feel sorry for the Minister of Finance who has to get up every day to defend the indefensible, the budget of his predecessor.

We would like the minister to bring in his own policies and we will give him the benefit of the doubt. He might be better than his predecessor because that would not be too difficult.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the state of the Canadian economy has to be put in context with what is going on around the world. The hon. member knows that Canada is part of the global community and that it is a participating partner in the global economy.

The hon. member will know, I am sure, that the world economic growth for 1990 was 2 per cent. For 1991 it is 1 per cent, the lowest it has been since 1981-82. All around us are countries which are experiencing grave difficulties. The United States is projecting growth of 2.5 per cent in 1992. Germany is projecting growth of 1.5 per cent in 1992. France is having difficulties; it is projecting growth at 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent. Italy is projecting growth at 2 per cent. The United Kingdom is projecting growth at 1.5 per cent.

Madam Speaker, the Canadian situation has to be viewed within that context. I think from the standpoint of comparison, we are doing reasonably well compared to other industrialized countries in the world.