

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what ad the Hon. Member is talking about, but I am sure there must be two ads; one Government claiming credit, another Government claiming credit and now both Governments claiming credit for the 8,000 jobs. What I was referring to in my remarks was the fact that the total number of unemployed people in Newfoundland has not decreased. I am not talking about percentages, I am talking about the total number.

As far as the deficit is concerned, the hon. gentleman who just commented is, I believe, one of the Hon. Members in this Chamber who would hope that there would be an increase in Government spending in his own riding. I would refer him to the fact that 90 per cent of the entire *la dette publique*, the public debt of Canada—

Mr. Rodriguez: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker: The hon. gentleman did not know I could speak French.

Mr. Rodriguez: You are trilingual, George.

[Translation]

Mr. Baker: What is the problem?

Mr. Rodriguez: In French!

Mr. Baker: The problem is this Government! Canadians are not responsible for the problem. No sir.

Mr. Vincent: No, the Liberals are!

Mr. Baker: The people of Quebec are not responsible for the problem. The people of Manitoba are not responsible for the problem. This Government is responsible for the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker: Twenty-three per cent of the national debt has been accumulated by this Government in the last sixteen months. That is true. And today, this Government is blaming Canadians. Today, this Government is punishing Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Attewell: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) must have a bad memory. Let me recount events starting in 1975. It took this country 108 years to accumulate a national debt of approximately \$20 billion. In nine short years the Party of which the Hon. Member is a part went on a spending orgy and the debt of this country is now around \$200 billion. That would be no problem if we did not have to pay interest, but we do. Canadians are finally realizing the gravity of this situation. Almost 40 per cent of what we take in in revenue must now go to service the debt. Myself and all my colleagues in my Party applaud our Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) for having the intestinal fortitude to bring forth a Budget which is fair and which gets at the reduction of our deficit year by year.

The Budget—Mr. Chartrand

In the year just ending, our total spending will have grown by 3 per cent versus 3.9 per cent as forecast last May. That is a record in itself. If we eliminated the servicing of debt there would be absolutely no increase in spending. That has not happened in 20 years. So we are clearly on the right track under the leadership of our Minister of Finance, and I cannot for the life of me understand why the Hon. Member would turn such a blind eye to the history of which he was an integral part.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I admit that 90 per cent of the total federal debt, the net debt, is about \$225 billion. The gross debt, if we add up our guarantees to Crown corporations, and so on, would be another \$80 billion or \$100 billion. It is interesting to consider when these debts multiplied. Ninety per cent of the total debt was accumulated in the past 10 years. Fifty per cent of the total debt was accumulated in the last four years, and 23 per cent of the total national debt, the net debt, was accumulated since the Tories have been in office. Those are the facts and figures. They are in black and white in the documents of the Minister of Finance. So when I say 23 per cent of the total national debt was accumulated in 17 months of Tory rule I am not wrong, according to the figures of the Minister of Finance. Neither is the hon. gentleman wrong in saying that 90 per cent of the total national debt was accumulated in the past 10 years, and neither is he wrong in saying that half the total national debt was accumulated in the past four years.

Mr. Attewell: Who made the commitment?

• (1230)

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is talking about commitment. According to the *Budget Papers*, the greatest single increase in the national debt was accumulated by the present Tory Government since it came to power. It accumulated more debt in a 16-month period than any previous Government ever accumulated. With one correction, the hon. gentleman was correct in saying in his broad overview that \$225 billion is not the total national debt. It is more like \$350 billion, since one has to take into account loan guarantees, borrowings by Crown corporations and other matters such as that. I would point out to Hon. Members that expenditures in each one of those four categories in terms of the gross national debt went up by over 30 per cent under the Conservative Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the Hon. Member for Verdun-Saint-Paul (Mr. Chartrand).

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Chartrand (Verdun-Saint-Paul): In many respects, Mr. Speaker, the February 26 Budget tabled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) will long be remembered by Canadians, and it will have a significant impact on the future of our country. Our Government has chosen to steer a new course by resolutely tackling the excessive deficits which had