

Government Orders

• (1640)

Mr. Speaker, I know that you are giving me a signal that my time is coming to an end. Our actions in the February 1990 budget, together with measures announced by the President of the Treasury Board in December, reinforce the momentum of earlier measures. These ensure that the goals of the April 1989 budget will be reached.

In closing, I want to say that I think that this government and this finance minister should be applauded for the manner in which we are managing the economy and ensuring the future of our children and our grandchildren. I hope that we can look at quick passage of this supplementary money.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take part in this debate today, on third reading of the government's borrowing bill, because it gives an opportunity to review the really disgraceful financial performance of this government, that we have been witnessing in this House, for me only since November of 1988 but for other members on this side it has been since 1984. The disastrous consequences of those policies are coming home to roost on Canadians, as they are faced with massive tax increases, in addition to the numerous tax increases they have already had under this particular government of incompetence.

I wanted to start by referring to the speech just made by my hon. friend who spoke about the increase in the Ontario budget. Ontario has a Liberal government and I am sure that fact is not lost on hon. members opposite. It certainly is not lost on the general public in Ontario because I think they realize with that government the difference between competence and incompetence.

Here, in Ontario, they have a government which is able to balance the budget. It inherited a very substantial deficit from its Conservative predecessor government and it has managed to bring that deficit completely under control. It managed to have a surplus last year on its accounts and this year it has budgeted for yet another surplus, in spite of the fact that a \$490-million cut in its transfer payments to that province has been announced in the Minister of Finance's budget. In addition, a \$1.2 billion cut in transfer payments has been applied to that province since the current Minister of Finance became

that minister in 1984. In other words, the province of Ontario has suffered greatly at the hands of federal government in terms of the funds that were made available to it. In spite of that, it has managed to arrange for a balance in its budget.

It was interesting to listen to the hon. member bleating on with his figures trying to blame every shortcoming of the present government on previous Liberal governments, doing his best, to make it appear that all the blame could be laid there, which even the Minister of State for Finance knows is nonsense.

He neglected to talk about the Ontario civil service because he knows that the province of Ontario is one of the best managed in Canada. I would not want to draw any unfair comparisons with other Liberal provincial governments in this country, and there are some very, very good ones, but the one in Ontario is, I submit, an outstanding example of fiscal prudence and responsibility.

What we need to do is look at the figures for the civil service in Ontario. This government has made a great trumpeting cry about how oversized the civil service was and has announced that it has cut 12,000 jobs, I believe, from the civil service since 1984. Anyone who has any familiarity with the way the civil service works knows that all the government has done is cut the jobs and farmed the work out on contract to their fat-cat Conservative friends. That has been going on now for five years and it continues. One can look at the figures provided on the number of civil servants per person in the population. Ontario, which administers such extensive programs as health care, education, and maintenance of highways in the province, has a civil service of 83,300 people. Ontario's population is 9,598,000, so that there is a ratio of 115.2 people for every civil servant in the province of Ontario.

Compare that with the government of Canada which, after all, does not bear such heavy responsibility for such intensive programs in any part of Canada, except possibly in the Territories. It has a civil service of 294,400. The population of Canada at 26,151,000 yields a ratio of population to civil servants of 88.8. With 88.8 as compared with 115.2, one gets some idea of why the federal government has difficulty curbing its expenditures and getting them under control.