

Government Orders

responsibilities, my debt, and share it, pass it on to this one, and that one, etc. I wish to hear your comments, your reactions, please.

Mr. Vincent: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the questions asked by my colleague from St. Boniface and I thank him. He was talking—and I will take each point in order—I am not going to jump into the feud between the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, I think it is up to them.

• (1820)

The second point was that he is tired of hearing me say that we inherited the debt from the Liberal government and I agree with him on that, Mr. Speaker. I am willing to promise not to mention again in this House or anywhere else that the debt we inherited in 1984 amounted to \$200 billion and that we were stuck with it. I am willing on one condition. That my friend from St. Boniface promise not to mention anymore that we doubled the national debt and that it was our fault, because, Mr. Speaker, when they say “You doubled the national debt” I must answer: Yes, but only because of the interest on your debt. That is the problem and that is what I must answer him.

Then, if he stops saying that we doubled the national debt, I will not mention anymore that it was his debt, Mr. Speaker.

His other point was about the 1983–84 or 1984–85 fiscal year. He was partly right, but I would like to expand a little on the 1984–85 fiscal year, because that is the year this government was elected—seven years ago yesterday since we officially took power on September 17, 1984—

Mr. Duhamel: Already seven years!

Mr. Vincent: Seven years. You see how fast it went.

Mr. Speaker, on September 17, 1984 his government, which had ruled up to that date, had already made commitments for the next fiscal year and you will understand that commitments made by a government have to be met, even if the government changes. This is why I say he was partly right as far as dates are concerned, but not as far as cash is concerned, Mr. Speaker because in 1984–85 we spent the money his government had decided to spend. This is also the kind

of situation we have to live with and I even remember, Mr. Speaker, voting for the budget of Marc Lalonde. I held my nose, but I did it. When we were elected we had to pass the budget of Marc Lalonde. What could I say?

The answer to the last question, Mr. Speaker, is yes, spending increases have averaged less than 4 per cent in seven years. And we have cut all the federal government expenses. We did not cut transfer payments to provinces, as claims my colleague. We have reduced the increase in payments to provinces. The best example of that is the fact that Québec and Manitoba, his native province, will receive more money than last year. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have reduced the increase in transfer payments to provinces, I have said it many times in this House.

You are telling me again that I cannot speak anymore. Well then, I will sit down. Thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Ross Stevenson (Durham): Mr. Speaker, I would like to place a comment and then a question to the member for Trois-Rivières.

I liked his approach in explaining the historical development of the growth in debt that has occurred here in Canada. I think it is significant to note that we have an opportunity within four or five years to once again have a balanced budget in Canada. That is quite different than what we have heard over the last several years, and certainly a very different spending trend than had been established prior to 1984.

In the province in which my constituency is represented, Ontario, we have also seen in recent years a growth in program spending under the provincial Liberal government averaging about 10 per cent per year while the federal growth in program spending was at about 2.7.

Now, under an NDP government, we see a deficit this year of something in the order of \$10 billion. Clearly, we must have learned that deficits are nothing more than deferred taxation.

Canadian taxpayers feel that they have been paying enough tax for many, many years. Of course, they find out that they have not been paying enough to pay all the bills. I would like you to sort of contrast the views, the opinions and the policies of the NDP in Ontario and what they are attempting to do and what the government