

Supply

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Madam Speaker, I would like to add my words on the issue of Canada's financial circumstances.

The other day I heard it described as a prize fight in Canada. It was a prize fight between the fiscal disciplinarians, and I would characterize the fiscal disciplinarian as our Minister of Finance, and the social capital advocates. I would describe the minister of HRD as the social capital advocate. This prize fight had been won by the fiscal disciplinarians. The commentary was that this was a tragedy for Canada because our social programs were going to be eaten away by fiscal disciplinarians, those who had understood and realized the depth and severity of our debt problems.

My difficulty with that discussion and argument is that surely there is a connection between our social programs and financial responsibility. Surely there is a connection that will not allow that to be broken.

I would like to go over a few individual statistics. I hear over and over again that the way out of our debt problems is simply to close loopholes and make our taxation system fairer.

Taxes now account for a much bigger proportion of the average family budget than shelter, food and clothing combined. It is a complete reverse of what is normally present in the country. In 1961 the reverse was true.

• (1645)

There are those who say that the rich in our society should take a heavier hit from taxes. Last year the top 30 per cent of families, those earning \$61,660 or more, paid 62.4 per cent of the taxes. "Let's hit them harder", say some. To those who say that we are not taxed too highly compared to our major trading partner, Canadians pay \$50 billion more tax per year than Americans after adjusting for the size of our economy. We are taxed to the eyeballs. We are taxed until we are drowning. We are taxed so much that anyone who says we can pay more taxes is dreaming.

I liken this to two individuals. One is a prize fighter who is lean, mean, quick and knows all the tricks. The other prize fighter looks like a Sumo wrestler. The Sumo wrestler waddles into the ring and says: "I'm going to take you on" and does take on the quick, alert prize fighter by lying on him and squashing him. There is no talent in that at all.

The overweight, bloated debt in our country is a Sumo wrestler and it is going to kill completely the prize fighter who has the ability to move quickly, to adjust to circumstances and to be competitive.

I tried to look for an international comparison to see if Canada could look at some other location. I looked at New Zealand. I

took an opportunity to review what happened in New Zealand in 1984. New Zealand has a House much like ours and these same conversations were going on in 1984. The government of the day said: "Everything is fine. We are in third place in the world. We are the third best country in the world. Everything is fine". We heard that.

One day after the debt wall—the member opposite said not to be so violent—I was going to say smack into the debt wall but instead I will say gently nudge up to the debt wall and hip check the debt wall. New Zealand did a hip check of the debt wall. They did not smash into the wall. In one day New Zealand went from the third highest in the world to twenty-second.

My field is health care so I looked at what happened to health care in New Zealand in that one day. The same scenario faces Canada. In one day they ended up with advertising on the ambulances to pay for the fuel. To go to sick patients they had to advertise chocolates and booze, in order to get the sick patients to the hospital. In one day they went from a system very similar to ours where everything was free to a system where there were user fees for everything.

One of my friends who practised medicine in New Zealand said: "The tragedy for those individuals who came to the hospital with a coronary was that they lay sweating in bed worrying about how much it would cost". This was from a society that said: "Everything is fine. All is well". One day later, their health care system was gone. Can members sitting on the other side tell me that is not a problem?

What do I see in our health care system that caused me to come to Parliament, to leave a medical practice that obviously is better than doing this? What caused me to come here? These are the things that caused me to come here.

First, the waiting lists for my patients were getting longer. I am told there are no problems in Manitoba today. Hip replacement is a 60-week wait. The standard for Canada should be 12.7 weeks. No problems in Canada.

I watched technology in our country slipping behind other countries. We have in Canada 1.1 MRI machines per million people. The U.S. has lots of them. They are techno freaks so I will not talk about the U.S. Germany, a country very close to us, has 3.6 MRI machines per million people. Where do we go if we need an MRI in our country? We go to the U.S. We cross the border. We put our Canadian dollars on the table in the U.S.

• (1650)

The technology that we need, that we deserve, that we must have, is being denied by a rigid set of rules that say we cannot provide more funds to the health care system. That might privatize something.