

The Budget

I happen to chair the public accounts committee. When it comes to evaluating our programs to make sure that we are getting bang for the buck, that we are giving Canadians efficient services and that we are reaching the goals we have set, I am not so sure that disbanding the evaluation program in the Minister of Finance's department this year was such a good idea.

We criticized it; I think we were right. I understand the Parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance was saying that the scientific tax credit was a sham. Indeed it was. There were 10 evaluations made of certain programs going from the Cape Breton investment credit down to the disability tax credit. On every one of those evaluations by the Minister of Finance, his department said: "We are a bit embarrassed by the results of the evaluation". It was not just one program; there were ten. Yet they did away with it. They just said: "This is making us look like a bunch of fools here so we have to get rid of it".

Why is it that we are going to continue saying to Canadians: "We have a huge deficit, we have a heck of a big debt to repay"? The debt servicing charges per year are \$40 billion, yet this government has done no evaluation of the debt management program. When we asked for that we heard: "Well, we will see". We would think on one of the most costly programs in this country, the debt repayment program, there would be a willingness on the part of the government to say: "Yes, we are going to manage this economy properly. We are going to be good managers and we are going to evaluate whether we should be borrowing short term, long term, medium term, whether we should go into Canada Savings Bonds, or whether we should go into other types of borrowing papers".

We are not getting there. It is sometimes very depressing to hear them tell Canadians that indeed we have a heavy debt. We do not know as Canadians whether that debt is being managed properly by this government. We should know. There should be a program of evaluating whether or not we are managing this debt. I put it to the government: "Do it and tell Canadians you will look at it at least and come up within the next few months with a program that will tell us whether or not we are getting bang for the buck".

I want to talk about the people in my riding. We are having a tough time in some parts of my riding. The social welfare programs are overloaded. If we listen to the regional government, it is going to cost an additional \$60 million in the Ottawa-Carleton area to look after those people for whom you, Mr. Speaker, and all of us in this room care. We would like to see them be able to find a job and get some kind of relief from poverty.

I have soup kitchens in my riding. There has been a terrible increase in those relying on soup kitchens for one meal a day. It is depressing. Yet we hear this government, through the mouth of its own parliamentary secretary a few minutes ago, saying: "Canadians do not understand the difficulty we are in". They do, they do.

• (1220)

I want to read some statistics into the record about this so-called Ottawa fat city, the fat cat city as it is often referred to by some people in the press. In my riding of Ottawa-Vanier the signs of recession are everywhere: stores out of business and others struggling to survive. About 75,000 people in this region are receiving some form of social assistance, an increase of 34 per cent over last year. To put it another way, 11 per cent of the population in this region is receiving either welfare payments or family benefits. The number of welfare cases in Ottawa-Carleton jumped 41 per cent in 1991 and is expected to jump another 25 per cent this year.

In *The Ottawa Citizen* of January 3, 1992 the region's social services commissioner said that we had a crisis on our hands. This is not a political person speaking; this is an administrator. The cost this year alone will be in excess of \$60 million. He expects the monthly average of welfare cases to jump to 32,000 individuals and families in 1992, up from 1991 with an average of 25,000.

Bankruptcies have been increasing. As reported in *The Ottawa Citizen* of November 28, 1991, in the Ottawa-Carleton area 167 individuals and businesses declared bankruptcy in October, an increase of 14 per cent from the year before. For the first 10 months of last year bankruptcies were up 35 per cent.

The chair of the social services committee at the time said in January of this year that she had never seen such an explosion of demand for social services, and I quote her: "The situation this time is different, particularly because of the type of people applying for assistance. You have white collar workers and even people in management whose savings have run out. People want to