

Government Orders

I ask her how through years of good employment, higher revenue into the coffers of the government and lower interest rates her government could irresponsibly fail to pay off that debt. In fact, it has increased the debt and the interest payments on that debt.

I ask her how her government could spend \$22 billion a year paying interest on foreign debt. That alone is costing Canadians \$11 billion in forgone income tax, \$22 billion out of the Canadian economy in interest payments to foreigners. It is money that is not circulating in the economy. That is \$11 billion in income tax that could be collected if that debt interest were being paid in Canada. That is one-third of the deficit right there.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to the member from Winnipeg asking my colleague a question I recalled some of the personal income tax increases that have happened during this government's almost nine years in office. From 1984 to 1988 personal income taxes rose from \$37.5 billion to \$59.7 billion. From 1988 to 1992 personal income taxes increased another 22.6 per cent to \$73.256 billion.

As well as not tackling the debt, this government certainly knows how to suck out billions of dollars from the taxpayer. Does the hon. member not think that kind of Draconian attack on the taxpayers of this country goes a long way toward suppressing consumer confidence?

Mrs. Catterall: I thank my colleague for the question. It is probably a good time to remind Canadians of the 3 per cent surtax on income tax that was supposed to come off when the GST was introduced. They will know that they are still paying a good part of that surtax. It is making it more difficult for them to pay their mortgages and pay their debts. Nonetheless, Canadian consumers know they have to pay off their debt and that they cannot simply keep piling on interest on interest on interest as this government has done.

It is a good thing that Canadians are managing their personal finances better than this government is managing its public finances.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, what usually happens to the employee who does not know how to manage the company's budget? He is dismissed. Well, it seems to be high time to dismiss the Conservative government now in power, which from budget to budget has led us straight to quicksand.

When it took office eight years ago, this government promised to put the nation's finances in order and thus assure Canada a prosperous future. Today we see the results. Imagine what this country would have become if it had not promised us a better future.

Every year the Auditor General presents a report of government activities and spending. He does not just say what was done but adds comments and suggests possible cuts. What is this government doing about it? We really wonder.

From what the Minister of Finance presented to us last week in his economic statement, we may even wonder whether he read the report. If he did, he did all he could not to benefit from it.

He announced cuts of some \$8 billion spread over two years. About a third, \$2.5 billion, has to do with unemployment insurance. To quote Gilles Lesage in *Le Devoir*: "Most cynical of all, instead of announcing some breaks for victims of the crisis or, even better, announcing the promised jobs, the government attacks the present and future unemployed. Those who are already poor and voiceless will become even more so, as if they alone were responsible for their precarious situation. We gladly agree that reforms are necessary, but Ottawa should not be going about them in this manner at this time."

In Quebec the unemployment rate is rising all the time as job creation is not able to offset the lost employment. The Minister of Finance and the federal government could have announced that the overlapping jurisdiction and costly duplication involved in labour force training and development programs would end soon. Even more waste. Quebec needs the assurance that the constitutional agreements that were ready can be turned into administrative agreements. Ottawa is not moving and the situation is getting worse every day. Ottawa still