

*Government Orders*

was we had to deal specifically with the problem of our deficit and debt. If we did not we would pay the price over the short, middle and long run with higher interest rates, more instability with respect to exchange rates, more uncertainty with respect to inflation.

The international marketplace, whether we like it or not, does influence the domestic marketplace. Our finance minister—great credit due to him—has found that delicate balancing point between dealing with the need of the international marketplace to have confidence in the future of our economy while at the same time respecting the need of individual Canadians and their communities to have confidence in their government, to know their federal government is there standing behind them even though we have had to take difficult measures at this time.

No doubt we face more challenging budgets in the years ahead. I can refer to a recent Angus Reid poll that indicated some two-thirds of Canadians who were polled support the budget.

They have concerns. My constituents of Algoma are like other Canadians. They support the budget but they know they will feel the effects one way or another. The budget was fair because Canadians will feel it but they will also know and feel those efforts are worth the trouble.

Our finance minister in finding that balance has created a situation in which the cuts are as evenly spread across the country as possible without hurting the most disadvantaged. As the member for Egmont emphasized, he did it without increasing personal income taxes. That is of great credit to him. He listened to Canadians. He listened to the finance committee, which held prebudget consultations last fall.

I am honoured to be a member of that committee. When we listened to Canadians last fall from all areas, they told us in no uncertain terms we have to do something with the deficit.

The absence of whining among the witnesses was remarkable. The absence of whining after the budget is remarkable. Canadians understand something had to be done. It is testimony to the quality of leadership that the budget met the objectives of the international community and the objectives of most Canadians.

The finance minister had to respect the traditions of the country. One of the most fundamental traditions is the network that is our social safety net. It is one of the features of our country that sets us apart in this world. It is one of the features of this country that makes us one of the most desirable nations in which to live.

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All of us are aware the safety net is under review and we are expecting legislation later this year. The best way to secure the safety net is to have a strong and vibrant economy. The government and our finance minister have done just that.

I want to address some of the things my constituents will have to face. We have a transparent government. We consult with people and we share with them what needs to be done.

For some, their deepest worries are about pensions. They need not worry because the minister has done nothing to create concern in that area. In fact, he virtually has not touched the whole issue of RRSPs.

My constituents will have to share with Canadians everywhere as we cut expenditures. Some of those areas include the string of several dozens of small craft harbours in my riding of Algoma in northern Ontario. These are small recreational harbours and some not so small. They have developed over the last 20 or so years in support of tourism in the marine industry.

This government is not throwing out the baby with the bath water. What this government is saying to the provinces and in my case to the local governments: "Work with us, let us find a way to continue these local facilities. Let us do it in a way that gives you more local control over these facilities".

I have spoken to a number of municipal leaders in my riding. The response has been very positive to this government's initiative to say: "Let us partner with you. Let us preserve these facilities. Let us work with you so the local governments can take these over and manage them themselves, instead of having management from Toronto, Ottawa or elsewhere".

Many of my constituents had concerns about the federal RRAP program, which is a CMHC program that assists lower income people with needed home repairs. To the credit of this government the program has not been cut. I want to assure my constituents in that regard. The funding for the rural residential assistance program which was committed in the 1993 campaign is still there. Unfortunately there was a large backlog created in that program because the previous government cut the program. Now many people are lined up who need important work done on their homes so they can safely and healthily live in them.

There is a federal mining research laboratory in Elliot Lake. It is a CANMET lab. Likewise with this lab, the federal government did not say: "We are closing the doors. This laboratory has to be closed because the mining industry in the community is on the verge of total closure". Instead, the federal government has said to the community: "Let us partner. Let us find a way to attract other research into this facility so we can make a more viable research effort in this community. Let us partner with the province; let us partner with the private sector and others to create a viable situation for mine related research and other kinds of research in this community".

The government did not take the old hatchet to programs like we have seen previous governments do, when they had the nerve to even try. When they did do it, it was done without thinking. This government did not and does not do that. A tremendous