

this country. Atlantic Canadians are prepared to support the efforts of the Government to bring some control to spending.

The position of the Opposition with respect to deficit reduction was recently the subject of comment by a columnist in *The Globe and Mail* who described the Liberal's response as: "Depressing evidence that hypocrisy and political opportunism are thriving on the opposition benches". That is an assessment with which I and many of my constituents agree.

Let us consider what we have been able to achieve in our efforts to control the deficit and put a ceiling on Government spending. Growth of discretionary spending has been cut to almost zero from an average growth rate of 43 per cent in the three years prior to the Government taking office. In fact, it will be \$530 million lower in 1986-87 than over the previous year. Total program spending will be held to \$86.6 billion, which is lower than last year's spending. This is the first absolute decline in total program spending in over 20 years.

There are many Canadians who did not understand what the deficit meant but today are beginning to understand that it has very real consequences in their daily lives. It has real consequences on the price they pay for a loan at the bank, on their mortgage rates, the price they pay for goods at the store and it affects their opportunity to get a job.

Let me refer to other comments made about the Government's effort to bring some fiscal order to the management of this country. Hugh Anderson of *The Gazette* describes the Budget as: "A careful, politically prudent response to a legacy of grievous mismanagement". An editorial in the *The Globe and Mail* states: "Mr. Wilson's financial trend lines are things of beauty after years of irresponsibility".

The Budget recognizes the needs for poorer Canadians, a disproportionate number of whom live in Atlantic Canada. They will benefit from some of the specific steps we are taking to help low income Canadians who are a major concern to the Government.

For example, the child tax credit will provide greater assistance to low income families. It will provide for prepayment of \$300 per child in November, 1986. Canadians, many elderly and low income Canadians, will be eligible for a refundable sales tax credit of \$50 per adult and \$25 per child. Training programs and efforts to put people to work have been stepped up, and \$100 million a year for the next three years is directed to a special program to help social assistance recipients find employment.

I could go on to talk about the generous assistance program that has been put in place for Canadian farmers who are suffering from a very high debt load that has accumulated over the last decade. That was a period of low prices for crops and very high interest rates.

Of course, the most effective way to help needy Canadians who are unemployed is to provide them with a job. Canadians do not want a cheque from the Government of Canada, they want an opportunity to create their own wealth in our society and an opportunity to participate in the Canadian way of life. They want the opportunity to own their own home and pay

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their own bills. This opportunity has been denied to hundreds of thousands, indeed millions of Canadians over the last decade and Atlantic Canada has been particularly affected by the former Government's policy of spending without thought and efficiency in the last number of years.

I am not one of those who accepts the doom and gloom comments and observations of the Opposition. I am not one of those who believes that the situation which has always existed in Atlantic Canada must continue. I am of the generation that believes times will be better in Atlantic Canada. Our Government reflects that view and we believe that action can and is being taken for Atlantic Canada that will make significant progress in addressing the very severe economic problems facing Atlantic Canadians.

Let us consider the facts. Special programs have been established for Atlantic Canada. There is the Atlantic Enterprise Program which involves a wide expenditure of funds to encourage private sector lenders to make loans for business start-up or expansion through Government guarantees. There will be interest rate subsidies of up to 6 per cent on business loans used to support productive new private sector investment. These are sensible initiatives that require the support of the Government of Canada. It is a new approach that requires the Government to put some money on the table. If grants and mere dollar amounts are all that were required to improve the plight of Canadians, then we would have been successful long ago.

Atlantic Canadians will also benefit from the Atlantic Opportunities Program. That program was recently announced by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. McInnes), a Member from Halifax and an Atlantic Canadian with considerable clout in Cabinet and the Government. He has been able to persuade his colleagues, along with other Ministers and Members of Parliament from Atlantic Canada. The Atlantic Opportunities Program will direct hundreds of millions of dollars in purchasing power to small businesses in Atlantic Canada. I cannot agree more with the Hon. Member who said that small business will be the source of job creation. That is precisely what we are doing in this program. We are directing hundreds of millions of dollars to small business people. Over the next four years, Government procurement in Atlantic Canada will increase to \$2.2 billion, almost 40 per cent higher than the current \$1.6 billion. This \$600 million increase is expected to create significant long-term benefits for industries in Atlantic Canada and will generate over 20,000 person years of employment, or an average of 5,000 jobs per year. This is a program which does provide opportunities for small businessmen.

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We can be negative about it. We can say it is not going to work; it is just an ideological proposal from the Progressive Conservative Government. However, we do have a precedent which was introduced in the Budget of last year. It was to apply to eastern Nova Scotia and the Cape Breton region of Nova Scotia. It called for a beefed-up IRDP Assistance Pro-