

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, very briefly because the minister challenged me to speak about some statements that were made. I would like to quote from *The Ottawa Citizen* of December 4: "Don Mazankowski was pulling no punches". "There is a sense up here that all we do is bring out cheque writing machines and send people a cheque. Those days are over. Bleeding hearts want the government to spend more on social programs, Mazankowski said, but eliminating benefits for voluntary quitters is just being fair to workers and businesses who support the system. Look at the people who are working. Look at the people and the sacrifices they are making".

[*Translation*]

The worst example is what his colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration said, and I quote: "They claim someone who leaves his job for no good reason to go to Florida in the winter should get unemployment insurance benefits. It's about time the government had the balls to be realistic, considering the times we live in, etc. etc."

[*English*]

These statements, including the statement made by the former minister that the recession was made in Canada, are all part of the public record. The minister should stop accusing other people of misstating the facts. The facts are here in black and white in direct quotes in several newspapers as a result of statements made by his government in the last few days.

**Mr. McDermid:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member quoted the Minister of Finance, listing a number of things that he said. She just mentioned one here. She mentioned a number in her speech. I believe that a lot of them were probably manufactured by her as she went along. Using her usually excessive rhetoric, she probably attributed a number of things to the Minister of Finance that he did not say. I will be interested to see each one of the quotes she attributed to the Minister of Finance and the justification for that. She has only stood up and justified one of them.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member carefully. I believe he used these words: "We must break the vicious deficit

cycle". For nine years the government has made projections on deficit and debt which have not really come to pass. This government came into power in 1984. When the Tories were in opposition, they had a real attitude toward deficit and debt. At that time it differentiated their party from ours because we were a little more sympathetic toward people who were unemployed and in pain.

The government came in with a policy of tax reform yet it has had 32 tax increases, not to mention the poorly designed GST which, in fact, the Minister of Finance admitted last week required some changes. I think that is fine.

The trade performance on the merchandise trade surplus in the last six years has been in decline. The debt has doubled in the nine years of this government. I must confess that the inflation numbers are very good and interest rates are low. However, there is a feeling in the country that there is no confidence in our economy, no hope. I would suggest to the member that a lot of the reason why that exists is because there is very little trust in this government. There is no trust in its projections. That is a fact.

Does the member not think that part of the reason why we cannot seem to get the spirit of this country going again is because none of the actions that have been taken in the last little while are doing anything to rebuild that trust. He is basically making the same speech in year nine that was given in year one. Yet in the last eight years this government has never acted on its own advice or its own prescription.

**Mr. McDermid:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. I can tell the hon. member that I am not giving the same speech I gave nine years ago. I can say that our deficit is half of what it was when we came into power in 1984. In 1984 the deficit was about 8.5 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product. Today it is about 4.5 per cent. It has been cut in half.

I can say that we have an operating surplus today, which I could not say in 1984. The government of the day was borrowing \$16 billion just for the operations of the government. Today we have an operating surplus of some \$7 billion. So, no, it is not the same speech.