

You know what the future of a country means: its ability to continue to progress.

Mr. Speaker, a country can be compared to an individual. The day an individual has so many debts that he can no longer make decisions alone but only take orders from the credit union, the bank and his credit card issuers, that day, Mr. Speaker, he has lost his freedom of action. He depends on his creditors. It is the same with a country, Mr. Speaker. We must have freedom of action. To have freedom of action, Mr. Speaker, we must not be so much in debt that our creditors tell us what to do. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have understood that.

In this way, Mr. Speaker, the legislation we have passed and will continue to pass will benefit the country. Mr. Speaker, when the bill before the House today was tabled, I was convinced the Liberal party and the New Democratic Party would love it. I thought they would be falling over themselves to thank us for tabling it. The Liberal party said thank you on second reading but not a word from the NDP. Perhaps I should explain why they should thank us.

We realize Canadians are doing their share with the GST. We realize they don't like taxes and neither do we, but at least what they spend on the GST will be used only to reduce our national debt. It will not be used for anything else. We have created a special account. All the money from the GST, the net revenue from the GST, will go into that account, and the money will be used to reduce our national debt.

Mr. Speaker, when I say our national debt, which is nearly \$400 billion, it isn't your debt or the debt of the people in my colleague's riding of Terrebonne, it is the debt of every Canadian in this country. The problem is that it was accumulated between 1968 and 1984, and now we have to manage that debt.

Mr. Speaker, you are signalling that my time is almost up. In concluding, let me once again thank the Liberal Party which told us it supported the bill on second reading, and perhaps I may urge the NDP to consider the importance of a bill that guarantees that the money Canadians spend on the GST will be used strictly to reduce our debt and not to increase program spending or other expenditures. Nothing like that, Mr. Speaker. It will be used strictly to reduce the debt. I would also urge them to read the bill and change their attitude, because this country's economy needs a lot of improvement and,

above all, we have to get rid of as much of our debt as we possibly can.

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments and ask a few questions. The speaker before the last one mentioned that they had fought very hard against the GST. Since he is considered to be a very honest man, I would have thought that he would admit that the Liberals worked at least as hard to control this debt. There is also another point inherent to this: I find it surprising that he would have taken this opportunity to allege that we were not against the government. They often use this approach to try to discredit the Liberal Party. Maybe you could make some political comments about that.

My second comment is that we also want to control the deficit and the debt as much as anyone else. But it seems to me, and this comment is now addressed to you, dear friend, that, too often, you somewhat use this excuse.

You know, people often say: I am as I am, because of the way I was raised, or I have inherited this from my father or my mother. So, in your case, you have inherited the debt, which is very high, exceeding \$400 billion, from the Liberals. You repeat that so often that, frankly, it becomes annoying. You have a problem. You buy a plant which has a debt: you accept that debt. You have to administer: do it! Don't always use the Liberal Party as an excuse for a lack of success.

I have a third comment. I have a letter from the previous minister of finance, Mr. Wilson, that says that, at the end of the 1983-84 fiscal year, the debt was under \$168 billion. Five months and four days later, you were elected to govern the country. You took office, which makes seven months. Again, you claimed that the debt that you had to administer was from the 1984-85 fiscal year. Did you not have any responsibilities during the 1984-85 fiscal year? You were in office for more than half that fiscal year. It is very unfair to use these figures, these statistics from the 1984-85 fiscal year as you were in office for more than six months, nearly seven months.

Finally, and it will be my last comment, I wonder if you will give me some reactions. You say that, on the average, your government spending for the last seven years was less than 4 per cent. I would appreciate getting an extremely frank answer here because it is so crucial for all the Canadians who are listening. Was it not less than 4 per cent because you cut the transfers of funds? Because you passed the fiscal burden on to provinces, territories, municipalities, hospitals, colleges, and universities? Controlling the debt is easy if I take my