

I see my time has expired.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his insightful observations. I am only sorry that he did not get a chance to continue.

We are discussing today the failed economic policies of this government. I wonder if he would like to make some commentary on the following examples. I will quote the examples of this failure.

In 1984, at the end of the fiscal year, I have a signed letter from the then Minister of Finance indicating that the debt was \$167.8 billion. It is now in the neighbourhood of \$450 billion. The deficit at that time was in excess of \$30 billion and it is now as well. There is no improvement there either.

If one looks at the revenues at the end of 1984, they were in the neighbourhood of \$70 billion. Now they are roughly \$130 billion. Government has almost doubled its revenues and yet on the deficit there has been no real substantial improvement and the debt has deteriorated significantly.

• (1620)

Let us look at the situation. Unemployment is over 1.6 million and roughly half a million of those unemployed are young people. Over two million Canadians are receiving social assistance as we speak now. Over two million Canadians will be fed at food banks this year. Surely there has been no progress in that department.

If one looks at the level of poverty in Canada, we note that people living at the poverty level or below are almost five million. The majority are women, and over one million of those are children.

The government has been downloading as well to colleges, universities, provinces, municipalities. It attempts to suggest to Canadians that it has made some progress, that it has had some success. I wonder if my colleague would care to comment on those examples. Those are examples of failure. Are there other examples that he would like to share with us, and does he want to add some additional commentary?

Mr. Jordan: I want to thank my colleague for the excellent question.

He mentions that we went from roughly a \$168 billion deficit to something like \$400 billion. That would not be

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so bad except through all that the standard of living for most Canadians has dropped. You would expect if you were going out and getting that far in debt that you would have surrounded yourself with some luxuries. The statistics will show that just the opposite is happening, which indicates to me that there was no strategy whatsoever. There seemed to be almost a determination that we would go farther in debt and more Canadians would see their dreams, if they are entitled to have dreams anymore, shattered even more.

I think there is no way that it was expressed more clearly than in one of the national dailies. The headline reads: "The Tories may be proud of juggling the numbers, but Canadians see only the wreckage left over". It goes on to say: "Leadership means more than managing the economy competently. It means giving the nation a reason to pull together, a sense of direction, a vision. The Tories have lost their ability to call forth the best in Canadians and the people have lost their will to listen to them".

The last thing I wanted to say with the language of an economist—and they will use this—is when you do not go in the hole quite as far as you thought you would, they call it a surplus. I have seen them do that on another occasion. They plan to put more debt on the Canadian people, and if in any one year they have not gone quite as far in debt as they said they were going to go, they will call it a surplus. I was always rather surprised at that term. It is obviously an attempt to mislead the Canadian people, that is all. That is what this article in the daily suggests, that the Tories are juggling the numbers. That is the numbers game that we are into now. Canadians are not going to buy it.

Mr. Winegard: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I just heard the hon. member say that there had been a deliberate attempt by this government to mislead the Canadian people. I wish that remark to be withdrawn.

Mr. Jordan: I was quoting when I said a deliberate attempt to mislead the Canadian people. I will have to check the "blues" on that.

Mr. Winegard: Mr. Speaker, it was very clear. The member was not quoting and I would appreciate it if he would withdraw the remark.

Mr. Jordan: If the member is that sensitive, in spite of the fact that most Canadians would not object to that statement, it really shows you the state that the govern-