

across this nation into the high schools and elementary schools to assist in the teaching of the French language. In that way, everyone will have a better grounding in the language and, therefore, they will feel much more comfortable about it. Once people feel comfortable about bilingualism, the problem will disappear. However, it will not disappear as long as this government is not willing to be honest with Canadians about the cost of the program. It will not be a success as long as there are clandestine programs the government refuses to tell us about. Nor will it be a success if people think their jobs will be jeopardized or if they think the government is trying to shove the language down their throats. Once we move into our school systems and do the work properly, we can look forward to an acceptance of a bilingual nation amongst Canadians, regardless of their background or their place of residence. That is the only way it will come about.

In conclusion, I want to make a few comments about the terrible situation in our penitentiaries. The answer which the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) secured from the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) today indicates better than anything else why these dedicated men and women who work in the Canadian penitentiary services are on strike today. The Solicitor General admitted to the House that the bill that was passed was the best he could secure. He said it as though the bill were some special bill of his. It was a bill of the parliament of Canada, not the Solicitor General. It was presented to the government by members of this House to implement. As was indicated, the bill was to the effect that in capital murder cases, the death penalty should apply.

I do not think there is a Canadian in this nation who would object to a sentence being commuted if a jury, in a capital murder case, recommended mercy. However, wholesale commutation of death sentences, regardless of the law, only produces other forms of lawlessness such as penitentiary employees assuming the right to take a day off work because there is no way they can get through to the Solicitor General to convince him that their personal safety should be considered. These employees do not feel they have any safety. Surely, there is ample evidence to indicate that there is not sufficient protection for them in our penitentiaries.

The Solicitor General is supposed to be responsible for penitentiary employees and the RCM Police. By adopting the stand he has, I do not see how he can expect any support or trust from the people he is supposed to represent and for whom he is supposed to speak. He does not speak for them. That is the sad fact of the matter. The sooner the Solicitor General leaves that portfolio, the better off this country will be from the point of view of law and order. As far as I am concerned, that could not happen too soon.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I am very glad to be able to participate in this debate on the budget. First, let me congratulate my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), for another job well done.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Budget—Mr. Chrétien

Mr. Chrétien: It is never easy to be Minister of Finance and, in a time of serious economic upheaval, the task is particularly difficult. We, therefore, are especially fortunate as Canadians to receive the economic leadership from a strong and courageous minister.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: I want to talk today about the reduction of about \$1 billion in planned expenditures of the government in the present fiscal year. I have been surprised to hear opposition members and some members of the press describe these reductions as cosmetic or tokenism, and at the same time call for new expenditures. I can assure hon. members that there is no one minister, province or sector of our society which will view the reductions as tokenism or cosmetic. They know that it is very real. Unlike some Tory members, I believe that \$1 billion is a lot of money.

In a time of inflationary pressure, the government has decided to set an example of restraint. It is doing so by cutting back on its planned expenditures. To cut back the rate of growth, some planned expenditures must be cancelled. These cutbacks are not inconsistent with some growth. This is a very significant and important aspect of the economic policy of the government.

Let me describe the situation that led to the stringent measures the government has taken. At the time of tabling the main estimates for this fiscal year, we showed in the booklet, "How Your Tax Dollar is Spent" that we expected to spend a grand total of \$35.4 billion for budgetary expenditures, loans, investments and advances and old age security. In that total, we made provision for about \$1.2 billion in supplementary estimates. Those figures were based on the November budget. Hon. members may recall I have said on a number of occasions that it was my intention to hold the growth of expenditures to 15 or 16 per cent over those of last year. That total of \$35.4 billion was 15.4 per cent higher than the level of expenditures forecast for last year at the time of the November budget. In the previous year, the percentage increase year over year was 25 per cent. However, following the main estimates some unexpected expenditure demands arose, mainly because of inflationary pressures and because of circumstances beyond the control of the federal government.

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We are now expecting these overruns in the following statutory programs: public debt charges, \$200 million; fiscal transfers to the provinces, \$190 million; hospital insurance payments to the provinces, another \$225 million. We are also expecting that the payments made to subsidize consumer-prices for petroleum products will be \$275 million more than allowed for. All these together total about \$900 million more than expected in November when we established the expenditure ceiling of \$35.4 billion.

At the same time we saw the necessity to undertake special expenditures to create jobs and to increase the supply of housing. The budget speech identified an amount of \$275 million for these purposes this year. The cost overruns, the special employment expenditures and the extra housing expenditures total \$1.175 billion, clearly enough to destroy any expectation of holding the growth in expenditures within a 15 per cent to 16 per cent limit,