

The Budget—Mr. Holtmann

he said the deficit was \$38 billion in 1984, but I am sure it would have hit the \$40 billion mark had we not taken over.

I am distressed from time to time, as I know my colleague is, about the misleading statements and inaccuracies which come out of the mouths of the opposition Parties. I want to commend the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) for his super record in his three Budgets. Not only has he gotten the deficit down but has done a number of different things to help Canadians. One is setting the target that there will be a Budget in February of each year. In the past, people had to guess when the next Budget would come down, but we have removed that uncertainty and given the process some stability.

• (1740)

Another area where there have been misleading comments is transfer of payments to provinces. The Opposition says that these payments are being reduced when we know they are climbing from \$65 billion to \$90 billion in the next five years. That is a \$25 billion increase to the provinces for higher education and health care.

My question concerns another area about which there have been misleading comments. It is regional development. I believe my colleague would agree that if Canadians believed what they heard from the Opposition, they would think the Government is insensitive to regional development. Are we insensitive to regional development?

Mr. Holtmann: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Hon. Member raised the question of regional development. Unlike past Governments, our Government has representation from every province coast to coast. I am sure Hon. Members in the Liberal Party have wondered how we achieve that.

Mr. Lapierre: We will do it next time.

Mr. Holtmann: The Hon. Member says that they will do it next time, but that is how to get regional representation and concerns expressed by people from all parts of Canada.

The Member is correct that Atlantic Canada requires much more assistance, perhaps even more attention than we have given it at this point. There is no denying that. However, the Government has limited funds for job creation. It cannot happen overnight.

The Hon. Member talked about the strength of the economy as a result of the Budget. Let me say something about our Minister of Finance. A good friend of mine, Mr. Robertson, told me that he overheard some opposition Members saying: "If we could only have a Michael Wilson among us. If we could only have a man like that, compared to all the former Finance Ministers we have had to change so often over 15 years, we would take him tomorrow".

As a matter of fact, those sentiments are being expressed in the opposition lobby. The fact is that the Minister of Finance has the economy moving as a result of his Budgets.

Mr. Lapierre: He should help you with the polls.

Mr. Holtmann: The economy is growing and investment is growing because interest rates are remaining low as a result of the option by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Lapierre: It does not show in the polls.

Mr. Holtmann: The Hon. Member says that it does not show in the polls. He is absolutely right, it does not show in the polls, but it will in time.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question I thought the Member for Selkirk—Interlake (Mr. Holtmann) admitted that indeed regional development spending was down and in fact the Government was not doing enough for regional development. That seems to concur with what Premier Peckford said in answer to the Budget. He said:

They are still re-emphasizing a market-driven economy completely when, in the context of Newfoundland or Manitoba or P.E.I., that will not work if we're going to get the kinds of things we need to be a market economy some day.

He went on to say:

We haven't gotten our message through that here regional economic development is extremely important and some of that growth that's happening in Ontario and Quebec can only be translated down here through federal intervention.

How does the Hon. Member respond to the comment on the Budget by the Conservative Premier of Newfoundland?

Mr. Holtmann: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to what was said by the Premier of Newfoundland. I think no one better than the Premier of Newfoundland knows the economic crisis his people face in that province. I also agree, although perhaps not totally, that the Government has looked at the problem and is always working on ways to help Newfoundland. Certainly a total influx of money alone is not the answer. I am sure the Premier recognizes that there are certain resources in the province he would like to develop.

We must remember that we have been in office only two and a half years. No one promised that we could turn the economy around in two and a half years. I also believe that we will continue to address the problem by using every means the Government has at its disposal to work with provinces such as Newfoundland. I believe we have the dedication.

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 5.45 p.m., it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 84(7), to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment now before the House.

[English]

Accordingly, the question is as follows: Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre), seconded by Mr. Mazankowski, has moved:

That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government.

And in amendment thereto, Mr. Garneau, seconded by Mr. Johnston, has moved:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"this House condemns the Government for: