

The Budget—Mr. Lang

nature of these programs. Under the equalization program, moneys are made available to the provinces, particularly to those which need money most. Under this budget, for instance, \$190 million has been added by way of equalization payments. Of this amount, I am happy to say \$26.4 million is to go to Saskatchewan, a province which has been going through economic difficulties and population decline as a result. It will receive an amount of money which should help it reduce tax burdens further on many provincial taxpayers, particularly upon property owners, as property taxes in some ways are the most regressive of taxes.

I hope the provincial authorities will take the suggestion of the Minister of Finance and make sure this money is used for the reduction of these taxes. As a citizen of Saskatchewan, I was pleased to note the increase in equalization, Mr. Speaker, especially as a number of years ago it appeared that Saskatchewan might be moving out of the so-called "have-not" category and into the "have" category, and might cease to receive equalization payments. I hope that day will come again. I want to say, now, that I shall continue always to support the equalization principle under which money is taken from across the country to help areas where available tax revenues are lowest. This is a fair and decent program, and one which is an extremely important part of the budget. It means that the provinces which have the lowest incomes and, often, the highest unemployment, find themselves in a better financial position to do something about it.

• (1610)

The budget contained another feature of direct interest to me and to people in my part of the country—the removal of the capital gains tax on family farms passing from father to son. This is an important measure psychologically and it leads me, again, to say to governments of provinces where estate taxes still apply in these circumstances, that it would be well for them to follow the lead of the federal government in this budget and to remove estate taxes, at least in this area, so that those succeeding to family farms need not fear a demand for taxes at that particular point.

Many hon. members will say, of course, that old age pensions should have been further increased. They should bear in mind the freedom which provincial governments have to pay more money to pensioners in their provinces where they see the need, and notice how few of the provinces have taken up this challenge or possibility. As far as a national program is concerned, consideration must be given to the needs of people across this country. There are other groups whose needs are also great and if there are additional funds to spend we must consider their needs also. But the challenge to the provinces is there—to pay more to those who need more in whichever province they are found. Not only does the challenge exist, but because of the arrangements made with the provinces under the Canada Assistance Plan it is easy for provinces to set up programs in such a way that the federal government pays 50 cents on every dollar made available. However, under the national plan, this is an important step to protect our old age pensioners and it is another part of this extremely significant budget. It is a budget which, as I have said through you, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member for Prince

[Mr. Lang.]

Edward-Hastings is one of many which the present Minister of Finance will be bringing before the House before the election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the minister but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, on rising to speak for the first time in parliament, I wish to pay tribute to the excellent manner in which you preside over this House, along with the Deputy Speaker and your other officials. It is a privilege for any Canadian to be able to speak in this chamber and to take his place among so many distinguished parliamentarians from all parties.

I want my first words to be addressed to the youth of Canada. I want to reassure young people who are legitimately questioning the validity of old institutions that parliament is the preserver of their freedom. I want to tell them to have faith in this institution and to participate, in some way, in the continued development of our country and to help make our society more human in an age when the computer threatens to submerge the individual. We are not at the end but only the beginning of a new century of development in Canada.

Little did I realize, Mr. Speaker, as I sat in the Commons public gallery many of an afternoon in my youth, that I would one day stand here. The fact that I am here, as an ordinary Canadian, ought to be but one example to young people that there is room for them in society. We need their ideas and their energy.

One of the most important functions of a member of parliament is to reconcile the divergent interests in the community so that we can move forward together. It is necessary, therefore, as Edmund Burke has said "to unite circumspection with vigor". For we live in a time of exciting change and new possibilities, and parliament must show that it is responsive to people's needs if people are to continue to believe in it. Our job is to rule and not to wrangle.

Let me say at the outset that I believe the cornerstone of public policy in Canada today must be the rights and dignity of the individual human being. That is the principle which will reinvigorate Canada with economic prosperity, human freedom and national independence. Thus, I am convinced that the federal government today is too big, too dominant, too expensive and imposes itself too much in people's lives. Look at the government estimates for 1973-74 as the latest reflection of this: a federal budget tripled in 10 years; government spending up 17 per cent in one year; a 10 per cent increase in civil servants in one year and \$300 million more for their salaries; a public works program of \$97 million in the City of Ottawa alone.

Little wonder that the Economic Council of Canada has warned us against this government extravaganza. With 47 cents out of every dollar earned going to the three levels of government, federal, provincial and municipal, we have too much government in Canada. Too many people are made overly dependent on government; those who truly need help, the handicapped, the aged, the infirm, are hurt in the process. I advocate a hold-the-line approach on government spending so that, as our economy expands over the next decade, the percentage of government in the