

**Mr. Speaker:** Shall all notices of motions stand?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### THE BUDGET

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from Tuesday, March 4, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government; and the amendment of Mr. Johnston (p. 11006).

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) as well as representatives from all Parties for taking the necessary steps to enable me to speak at this particular time. That is an example of the civilized behaviour we can all indulge in from time to time, and it is singularly appropriate in this House.

Having said that, I would now like to speak about the Budget, a very uncivilized act as Canadians have well understood since it was announced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) last week. I want to begin by making the point that in my judgment Canadians are neither altruistic nor selfish. The ordinary people of this land, much as the ordinary people of any country in the world, have a sense of decency and fairness about them. Certainly it is the case in Canada that, in approaching an annual Budget, the average Canadian does not expect charity. The average person does not expect a handout. However, the average person does expect a sense of fairness. There is no question about that at all.

We in the NDP, under the chairmanship of our finance critic, had a task force on taxation travel to most parts of this country in recent weeks. We heard the voice of Canadians, men and women from all over the land. If there was one thing that came through loud and clear it was that the Budget ought to be fair. This same opinion was clearly to be seen in a Gallup poll question answered in recent weeks, when well in excess of 80 per cent of Canadians expressed their view that the prevailing characteristic of a Budget, and I repeat, should not be charity or something special for them either as individuals or for their region of Canada, but they overwhelmingly felt that a sense of fairness should prevail.

In particular, we know Canadians, wherever they may live, saw the Budget as being anything but fair and they hoped that the Minister and his cabinet colleagues would have seen the light and brought in a Budget last week to redress the unfairness of the past. Well, that Budget has to be seen as one of the most unfair Budgets with which this Parliament has ever had to deal. The Conservatives imposed a tax increase on Canadians in the fall of 1984. They imposed another big tax increase

### *The Budget—Hon. E. Broadbent*

on the average family in the spring of 1985. Again in the winter of 1986 the Conservatives zapped the average Canadian. It is time this Government got off the backs of the ordinary people of this country.

I will not take a lot of time in enunciating the details, but the NDP, consistent with the social democratic traditions of this country, or indeed anywhere else, has taken the view that you not only criticize but you provide an alternative. Before the Minister brought in his Budget, the NDP finance critic, on behalf of my colleagues, outlined in considerable detail an alternative approach which ought to have been taken in 1986. It was an approach which would have dealt with the deficit and with maintaining essential programs, but overwhelmingly in its impact it would have dealt with Canadians' desire for fairness.

In the letter our finance critic sent to the Minister he specially showed how certain personal tax exemptions were not only unfair but counter-productive economically and ought to be removed. After analysis of a number of tax expenditures which provide not millions but millions of dollars to corporations, some of which are counter-productive economically, he proposed the removal of a number of them. Finally, he made certain suggestions about regulatory change. I want to underline that the net effect, had he listened to what we had to say, was an alternative way of raising \$3.2 billion.

I am underlining, before I deal with the Government's approach to the question of fairness, our seriousness about providing an alternative and our recognition that there are certain serious structural problems to be faced by the Government of Canada. We offered an option to the Minister but did he listen to these proposals? Did he listen to the concerns expressed by the people of Canada since the last Budget? Not at all. Instead of closing key loopholes for the rich in Canada, instead of taking certain action to remove some of the tax expenditure programs made available for 15 years, the Minister went ahead and zapped the average family with another \$350 tax increase. That brings the total to an amount in excess of \$1,300 in tax increases since the Conservatives came to office in the fall of 1984. This is the largest tax grab in the history of Canada since World War II from a Government which promised to move in the other direction. It promised to give ordinary Canadians a break and I say it is time it started to live up to its promises.

We in the NDP have, since the Budget came down, attempted to make the case for fairness. We have tried to point out just how unfair and unreasonable this \$1,300 burden is. Along with my colleagues, I detailed a complete list of how we reached the \$1,300 figure. When I was away from the House last Friday the Minister challenged our figures. He said they were wrong. I came back on Monday and sent him another detailed breakdown. I received no comment in the first 24 hours so I sent a note asking him if they are wrong what is wrong. I got back the note that I have before me. It was followed by a telephone conversation as well with the Minister of Finance. I want to share this information with the House and with the people of Canada.