

The Budget

see from the Government of Canada in the budget process. I do not recall that being done before. It was certainly a very positive step. I note the budget deals with many of the suggestions that came from the first ministers when they travelled to Ottawa to share their thoughts.

The Minister of Finance was involved in many sectoral consultations. Many of the groups that submitted their views to the minister sent those views on to various parliamentary committees. As a member of the finance committee, we received many of the submissions that were also submitted to the Minister of Finance, again a very broad sectoral process.

The minister consulted with individuals who had no particular expertise in an area or simply, as happened in many cases, were citizens who had concerns. As an MP I had the opportunity for direct input into the process, through the caucus, through the minister in a direct fashion. I have to suggest that I was really quite pleased with the budget because I think it reflects what many of my constituents were asking me to relay to the Minister of Finance.

There was also input through the various committees, for example the proposal dealing with the RRSP funding or the use of the RRSPs in the purchase of a home. This had been referred to our committee to do some investigative work. We were able to bring in many representatives that would be affected by the decision which enabled myself and other members of Parliament and the Government of Canada to fully research the idea before it was put in the budget. I compliment the minister for that very open process which took place with this budget.

One of the things I feel very good about is that finally we have seen a significant reduction in the deficit. It is dropping some \$4 billion and I think that that is long overdue. We had some difficult circumstances to deal with. The most difficult circumstance of all that we will have to deal with is the national debt of this country. If we do not very quickly stop it from growing at tremendous rates, it will be a problem that future governments will have to deal with and they will have to ignore everything else because there will be no money. I am pleased to see that reduction in the deficit.

At the same time, I have had some communications from some constituents who say that although the deficit has been cut and they are pleased to see that, why were taxes also cut? Why did we do that? Why did we not keep

them paying taxes so that we can reduce the deficit even further? I realize that this is somewhat a unique thought but I guess, from our perspective, we are trying to convince Canadians that we do have a good grasp on where we are going and we are able, because of our fiscal management, to in fact do both, cut the deficit and cut the tax rates individuals are paying. I am sure every person in this House, although I have not heard everyone say it, would be happy to tell their constituents, regardless of how much money they make, that they have a tax cut. I think that is important in the over-all scheme of things.

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Part of the solution to the present economic problems is to convince the consumers of Canada that there is some light at the end of the tunnel and that they can start freeing up some, making some decisions for the long term that would be good for the over-all economy. I think a tax cut signifies that. To be blunt about it, I hope we have another one next year.

My constituents certainly say they are paying enough taxes and that we have to reduce the deficit. If we can do both, which I hope we can do in the next budget, that will be just fine with me. That is certainly the direction I will be encouraging the Minister of Finance to follow.

If we come along a little further, we say: "Okay, those are generalities, let's get to some specifics". What are the specifics in the budget? If I had to stand up and say that this was a made for Ontario budget, I know some of my colleagues in this House would be upset with me, but I am quite proud to say this is a made for Ontario budget. The economic conditions of this country are being felt extremely hard in Ontario because Ontario has the manufacturing sector in the economy. I understand that and I am glad to see that the Government of Canada dealt with the problem that Ontario faces. It faces manufacturing problems. We hear about manufacturing plants going down.

General Motors in a neighbouring riding has announced or is in the throes of discussing whether it is going to shut down one of its assembly lines. I know the MP who represents that area from the NDP would not want to compliment the government on its action, but in fact what we did for General Motors and all of the feeder plants that are located in my riding and in all the ridings around GM is cut the income tax rate for manufacturing. That is good for every one of the employers in my riding and the GM plant that has to