

I find it very difficult, in looking at a time line of four and a half or five years, that somebody who was there before can still be blamed. I also find it a little difficult to swallow that if the deficit was \$168 billion five years ago, and it is \$330 billion today, that this Government has worked very hard to reduce that national debt. The deficit has remained quite strong and we are going \$30 billion per year further and further into debt. The suggestion has been made that this Budget is going to reduce our national debt or hold our national debt, or be a responsible Budget. Yet we are talking about \$30 billion in that case as well. That is the projected debt next year.

It seems to me that I would like to hear the Member's comments with regard to the last four years, not the past 20 years. I would like to hear him comment on how responsible it is to double the debt in four years, going from \$168 billion to \$330 billion, and where we are heading now.

An Hon. Member: Right downhill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): A short answer from the Hon. Member for Cambridge.

Mr. Sobeski: I guess it is where we draw the time line and I will start drawing the time line. In 1984 the annual deficit went from \$38 billion, down to \$34 billion, down to \$30 billion, and down to \$29 billion. It has been going down and down in that direction. From 1970-71, where we could perhaps start the time line, the deficit went up one year, went up the next year, went up the next year, and went up the next year. That has been the difference. With the time line going back to 1970, the deficit has gone up, and since 1984 to 1988 the deficit has been going down.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The period of questions and comments has now expired. The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Mr. Milliken) on a point of order.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, there have been discussions between the Parties and I believe there might be a disposition to call it one o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is there unanimous consent?

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): It being 1.08 p.m., I do now leave the chair—

S.O. 31

[*English*]

The Member for Regina Qu'Appelle (Mr. de Jong). I apologize.

Mr. de Jong: Madam Speaker, I understand as well that there has been unanimous consent. I understand the Liberals want to take a little longer lunch break. We are in favour of that.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order, please! It being 1.08 p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At 1.08 p.m., the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 31

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

IMPORTANCE OF REDUCING BUDGETARY DEFICIT

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Brome—Missisquoi): Last weekend, Mr. Speaker, I met with about one hundred electors, as most Members do in their own riding. They all agree that Canada's budget deficit has to come down, so today I should like to tell the House about the message I conveyed to them. I told them that, human nature being what it is, we would all be inclined to let someone else shoulder the heaviest part of the burden. The Government's role is to ensure that as many people as possible are prepared to tighten their belt so as to restore the balance in the public accounts.

Regardless of the means used in the quest for that goal, the Opposition Parties are bound to disagree—for partisan motives, probably—as do certain pressure groups who feel they have been cheated out of something. The Government must entertain and respond to objections, listen to representations and consider their legitimacy, but first and foremost it has to govern, and that means discharging the responsibilities mandated by the people. The situation is too serious and our leaders simply cannot jeopardize Canada's economic future for the sake of political gain.