

Miss Nicholson (Trinity): Yes, it is a difficult question. However, I would just say to the Hon. Member that the *Budget Papers* show the Government is expecting to reap \$60 million from this kiddy tax.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I want to move from the subject of popcorn and ask a serious question, if I could. The Hon. Member has suggested in her critique, and I agree with her, that the Conservative Government has dealt with the question of the deficit in this Budget in a manipulative way. Would she have preferred an increase in the deficit resulting from this Budget in order to achieve some of the economic and social goals which she and other members of her Party have talked about? Or, would she have, as seems to be the implication, accelerated the decrease in the deficit given the great deal of concern with which she addressed it in her speech.

Miss Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, although I am quite prepared to do so, my comments did not deal with whether the deficit could or should be further reduced. My comments were directed to the fact that the issue was not clear. The only promise the Government made concerning management of the economy was to get the deficit below \$30 billion. That will happen in March, 1988, through the devices I spoke of, those being the \$1.2 billion which is derived from changing the timeframe in which companies can remit the compulsory payroll deductions, and by deferring certain other expenditures. My criticisms were directed at the fact that we had been told the deficit would be reduced. This was the only promise they made. In fact, the deficit has not been reduced in a straightforward way.

• (1500)

As for the rest, the policy of the Liberal Party for many years now has been to reduce the deficit incrementally as we came out of the recession, insofar as that could be done without cutting programs, choking off recovery or hurting people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There will be two more questioners, the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary and the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney). I hope they will be very succinct.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Della Noce: Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief, because my colleague the Hon. Member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Charest) has presented a very good summary. There are, however, a couple of points which I should like to make. My hon. colleague from Trinity (Miss Nicholson) was visibly delighted to be able to report that the price of gasoline had increased by 4 cents a gallon. She was right, but she overlooked the fact that it was over a three year period. Under the Liberals, with Mr. Lalonde's energy policy, there were increases every four months.

She forgot also to mention that there was a tax decrease when we got rid of the Canadian ownership charge of nearly

one. That is when she really got me, for I had investigated the situation in 1986. When the price of gas went down 12 to 13 cents because of the world price following the removal of the National Energy Program, at a time when Mr. Lalonde expected a price of \$85 for a barrel of oil which is now at \$24 a barrel. It is a dream come true where I cannot follow her . . . I hope she didn't try to deliberately mislead the House, for what she said is very serious. She said that some transportation companies are hurting and will have to lay-off people. Where are those transportation companies which are increasing the price of their services because the higher cost of gasoline has increased? Now that it is 12 cents lower, none of them are charging less for their services. The buses which people—

[*English*]

Every time there was a little increase in gasoline, the tickets were printed during the night and the next day people had to pay the increase. This year alone there has been a 12-cent a litre decrease, which is equal to 65 cents a gallon. I have not noticed any decreases in bus fares. My child asked for \$25 for his bus pass this month for which I usually pay \$20. How can you say that these companies are in trouble? Where do we see the results of the 12-cent decrease they received? What the Hon. Member said is false.

Miss Nicholson: The figure which I gave for the increase in the excise tax on gasoline is accurate. My statement that transportation companies complained last year that the first increase would put them at a competitive disadvantage with American companies is also true. The letters and briefs which I received from transportation companies were sent to many Members of Parliament. I believe the member opposite must have seen them as well.

Mr. Daubney: Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the Hon. Member and, therefore, like the Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest), was somewhat disappointed in her remarks. She spoke of poor Canadians and suggested that we were essentially putting the screws to them. That is not the case at all. She will know that in the tax reform which has taken place thus far—and there is more to come—hundreds of thousands of low income Canadians have effectively been removed from the tax rolls.

I would like to ask the Member about the improvements to the Canada Pension Plan which the Government brought in effective January 1 of this year, particularly those with regard to disabled Canadians. We increased the benefits payable under that plan by \$150 a month to benefit over 150,000 disabled Canadians. Yet, the Liberal provincial Government in Ontario, the Liberal provincial Government in Prince Edward Island, the Liberal provincial Government in Quebec and the NDP Government in Manitoba deducted that \$150 from the income of those disabled Canadians in receipt of social assistance programs. I would like the Hon. Member to comment on that from her point of view of fairness and concern for low-income Canadians.