

The Budget—Hon. B. Bouchard

Air carriers have done what they had to do. They have been extremely innovative, they have replaced outdated equipment, they have changed service levels and their operating strategy. They have also implemented many ways to improve system efficiency.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this increase has also come at a price—a serious congestion problem. The industry is always asking us to increase airport capacity, to clear more aircraft for takeoff and landing and to give priority to commercial flights.

This increase in air traffic has aroused some public concern, especially regarding safety and noise pollution and also level of service and fares.

But we must say that the answer to the problem of increased air traffic must take account of divergent concerns and interests. However, we do intend to consult both the public and the industry to find answers and solutions.

[*English*]

In this regard, the Minister of State for Transport (Mrs. Martin) and I met extensively with many groups and individuals in the Toronto area about congestion at Pearson International Airport. The construction of Terminal 3 will alleviate some congestion and inconvenience but numerous problems remain. We are preparing an overall strategy to resolve the problems that air travellers are experiencing throughout southwestern Ontario. This type of approach will also be taken in seeking solutions to capacity problems at Vancouver International Airport.

The initiatives that we are proposing, and those we shall put forward in the coming months, will be dictated by the imperatives of the Budget in addition to renewed concern for ensuring transportation safety and efficiency.

There are many other issues that I would hope to deal with here but what is important in today's debate is to consider the facts and the reality of the measures that are contained in the Budget statement.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the Government has shown that while preparing the future, we have not neglected the essential needs of the present.

I asked Canadians to look at the facts. I also ask them, when they judge this Budget, to consider the spirit in which it was made. The reason we are taking difficult measures today is that we are managing an inheritance bequeathed to us by others. Personally, I do not wish to

leave future governments a fiscal heritage like the one we had in 1984 and which we will have to grapple with for many more years.

We are convinced, as we have shown in the past, that responsible management of public finances is much better than a short-sighted policy. What is at issue here, Mr. Speaker, is whether we wish to maintain the Canada we know and of which we are proud: a country committed to growth, to reducing inequalities, to compassion for the less fortunate, a country that wants to face the challenges of the environment, peace and openness to the world with firmness and generosity.

These challenges are not one Government's alone, Mr. Speaker. They belong to a whole generation of Canadians in every walk of life who have a basic responsibility: to leave their children as much opportunity for development as we had.

• (1150)

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, again this morning we have a Minister of the Crown supporting this Budget because he says it is necessary to deal with the deficit. I want to ask the Minister, who was a member of the Cabinet before the election, where was he during the pre-electoral period last summer and during the election campaign when the Government was making promises and commitments in the amount of \$17 billion? The Government did not mention the deficit during the election campaign and did not mention any requirement for cutting programs—old age pensions, family allowances or unemployment insurance. As a matter of fact, the Government said the opposite during that period of time. The Government did not alarm the country with the problem of the debt or the deficit. Immediately after the election the Tories discovered the deficit. They discovered this deficit and then in the Budget before this House, the Tories have brought in drastically increased taxation and severe cuts in important programs for Canadians.

I want to ask the Minister, and I put it to him straight, as a member of the Cabinet for the last three or four years, and especially as a member of the Cabinet last summer in the pre-electoral period and during the election campaign, is he telling the Canadian people and this House that he was not aware of the deficit, that he was not aware of the national debt, that he was not aware of the need to curtail expenses and to deal with the economic situation? Is he telling Canadians that he only knew about this problem after the election?