

*Government Orders*

ment is emphasizing trade missions around the world. Canada is a trading nation and new exports mean new jobs.

There is a companion priority to jobs for our national well-being that our budget planning must encompass. That is to sustain our social programs in the face of a changing global economy and domestic demographics.

This priority is reflected in our unequivocal support for Canada's health care system. It is also reflected in our commitment to ensure that Canadians are not discriminated against when they move from one part of the country to another and seek social assistance.

• (1140)

Let me add a few notes about the nature of Winnipeg and Winnipeg North Centre. I was first elected to represent that constituency in 1988. Many people have said to me: "You were the social policy critic of the Liberal Party in opposition and now you are working in finance. How do you resolve the two? Do you not feel as if you are doing harm to your own constituency?"

Let me state quite clearly to the House that the actions we are taking will help my constituents to have a strong province and a stronger country. It will increase the ability of governments to respond for years to come. The actions we are taking now will provide more opportunities for them than could be imagined under the present debtload.

The situation which has developed in the last 15 years has been an increase in child poverty, a high rate of high school dropouts, and the incidence of high unemployment in downtown Winnipeg. There is a feeling of helplessness, a feeling that governments cannot respond, that governments have neither the energy nor the ideas to develop a stronger economy.

I want to assure my constituents that uppermost in my mind, as I carry on in the position as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, is the impact of these actions on their lives. I know that by the way we are gradually reducing the deficit we will not harm the ability of the federal or provincial governments to respond to their needs.

There is in the public debate a great deal of noise about the impact of cutbacks on the provinces, about the impact of social transfers. Let me again assure everyone that every thought was given to minimize the impact on provinces such as Manitoba, Saskatchewan and other poorer provinces across the country so that they could retain the fiscal capacity to respond and deliver appropriate health care and social policies to our people. As the government regains its strength it will be able to respond even more clearly and strongly to ensure that there are job opportunities, school opportunities and a lifestyle we can all be proud of.

Let me conclude on the same note as I did over a year ago. For many years when it came to decisions on the economy and our fiscal dilemma, the federal government too often took the easy way out leaving the hard choices to another day. That has not been our path. We have made the hard choices and taken real action to bring the deficit down sharply. We have also taken measures to boost economic strength and a real commitment to sustain the social safety net Canadians from coast to coast to coast cherish.

The struggle is not over. We have more to do and further to go to complete our fiscal freedom. We must continue to set priorities for where the government can and must act to help growth and jobs.

This is where we came in today. On behalf of the government, I encourage hon. members to share the ideas and concerns that we can work together on to ensure a strong and prosperous Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance on his excellent speech. If only it reflected reality, it would be fantastic, but it does not. Coming back to the Liberal majority interim report on prebudget consultations, I would like to read to you a few lines of this whole report, which are quite telling and which distort the premises of this debate.

The last paragraph of the interim report on prebudget consultations, the Liberal majority report, reads as follows: "The Committee recommends that this House support the real and sustained progress being made on deficit reduction, while maintaining a balanced approach".

These few words seem to indicate that the government is taking the people of Quebec and Canada for fools, but that they are not; this is an insult to their intelligence.

• (1145)

The fact of the matter is that, in light of the actions it has taken over the past two years and the direction it is taking for the next three years, the government does not score well in terms of financial administration. Why not? Because the Minister of Finance will be meeting his targets in 1995-96 and in the following years at the expense of the unemployed, welfare recipients, students and those who are sick.

When the Minister of Finance tells us that, in 1995-96, his deficit will reach \$32.7 billion, we have to add to this \$32.7 billion the \$5 billion he snatched from the UI fund surplus.

When he talks about having largely exceeded the deficit reduction target for 1996-97 set in his last budget, when he talks about the deficit being brought back down to \$24.3 billion in 1996-97, once again, we have to add another \$5 billion in funds snatched from the UI fund surplus. I remind the House that, since 1990, the federal government has not paid a dime into the UI fund, which is fed by employees and employers through their