*Supply*

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about the Opposition being completely negative and solely criticizing without seeing some of the positive aspects. You can turn that coin as well, Mr. Speaker, and ask why the Minister continues to try to defend the indefensible. Why can those Hon. Members of the Government not stand up and admit to this country and to the senior citizens that what they did was wrong? They should stand up and say that, cut their losses and get on with the security which should be provided to the senior citizens.

I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister the promise which was made during the summer. All the financial statistics given by the Minister today, when he said there was no other way of manoeuvring, were there when he went across the country and gave the seniors his promise. Why is he prepared to renege on that promise? Why can he not stand up and be courageous, have some conviction for his own clientele, not for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources or the Minister of Finance? He is the advocate for the senior citizens.

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to explain to the Hon. Member again what the effects are on senior citizens. The Hon. Member conceded that what I have been dealing with is facts. That is what I have been dealing with, facts. I have also said that I will, and am, speaking for seniors. I hope he understands the point that we did not know, and he did not know—he was not in the House and he cannot be held responsible for it—about for instance, the kinds of scams which were costing us $2 billion plus as Canadians.

**Mr. Marchi:** Come on.

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** Just a moment. The Hon. Member did not know. If he takes a look at the last Budget of the previous Government, he will see that the trend line was down on the deficit. Not only for the one year was the deficit $5 billion more than projected, but the trend line was quite opposite to what had been announced. What had been announced was that the trend line on the deficit was going down, but in fact what had happened was—and it was not only for the one year in which we came to power—the deficit was approximately $5 billion higher than had been announced in the House.

The first point I make is that during the election it was not known. It was withheld by the previous Government. Second, if the trend line would have continued, not in the far distant future, a year or two, that deficit would be $40 billion on an annual basis. I appreciate that projections can be imprecise on either side of the issue. I accept that point made by the Hon. Member. However, if he would look at the projections for the five-year period for which most budgets are now projected, he will find that the projection by the end of that five-year period would be approaching $50 billion annualized deficit. I think the Hon. Member would admit generally that that trend line had to be reversed because it is the seniors who are getting the pensions, who are part of the social structure, and the expenditure in the social programs could not be maintained or sustained if that kind of debt were incurred or continued.

The Hon. Member also stated that money was given to the multinationals. That is another quick throwaway line which is used so easily. What happened with the National Energy Program? That is part of the recession and part of the problem of the deficit. We saw in western Canada young people who, as Canadians from various parts of Canada, had come to the West to work. We saw them on the Trans-Canada Highway going through my riding. They were going back unemployed. Instead of being able to create wealth and develop the future of the country, these young people had to rely on unemployment benefits through no fault of their own.

If the Hon. Member does not like that example of the wealth those Canadians could have created so that we could maintain social programs, I will give him another example. I have heard from time to time Hon. Members of the Opposition saying, "It's a deal for western Canada". I'm not sure the Hon. Member realizes, but for every dollar invested in the oil and exploration industry in western Canada—and I am speaking as a Manitoban and, in my part of the province we do not have oil exploration—over 40 cents is spent in industrial Canada.

The point I make to the Hon. Member is simply that I want better pensions for old age pensioners. That is why we came in with the widow's pension and why we are coming in with the widower's pension. That is why we came in with a disability pension. That is why I would like to see full indexing restored when the economy improves. That is why I would like to see the spousal allowance extended as the economy expands. That is my goal. That is why I work for seniors. That is why I work for others in the social programs. That is my intention and that is what I am going to work for. That is what my colleagues are working for.

**Mr. Nunziata:** He is making a speech.

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** I believe I have the right, Mr. Speaker, to respond, unless the Hon. Member thinks I do not. I believe the Hon. Member asked the question with all sincerity, but what I am saying to him is let us protect not only the present, let us protect the future, and the best way we can do it is just this way.

I could give the Hon. Member the example of the Scandinavian countries. Many people would put them forward as a model we should emulate. I point out to the Hon. Member that one must take a look at the tax rate and speak to people in the social programs, as I have done both in Sweden and in Denmark. I was told that they now have to re-examine and the reason they have to do so is because the deficit has now become such a load that they cannot maintain programs. They have to create new wealth. That is a reality. I cannot put it any other way.

I am saying to the Hon. Member that the best protection for seniors, or for any other Canadian, is to create wealth not only in order that the programs can be maintained, but that we can also create jobs and the wealth which comes from those jobs. That is for young people, for middle-aged people and for