

Government Orders

As I think back over the voting record of his party over the last year and a half, I really do not see any assistance that it has given to the Government of Canada in meeting the problems that he has outlined.

I think that I should also remind the hon. member that when the present government took over in 1984, we were spending \$16 billion—that is with a “b” and not with an “m”—more than we were taking in in taxes and, as a result, the deficit was increasing by that rate. Of course that was being added to the debt. At the present time, we have a \$9 billion surplus in that account, if we do not add on to the debt. The debt is one of the major problems that we are facing in Canada today. We need to point out that 80 per cent of that debt is as a result of interest on the debt that was left to us by the previous administration. Only 20 per cent of that amount is new debt.

• (1230)

With the opposition of the parties and also of the Liberal dominated other place to such things as the UI reform, our government is working very diligently under difficult circumstances. If this bill is not approved, it will cost the Canadian government another \$1.75 billion annually.

When the member states that the government is doing nothing, I believe that it is doing a great many valuable things. We all recognize that we can reduce our deficit by increasing taxes and he accused us of doing this. I should also point out that many of these tax changes that we have had were advocated by some members of his party. In other words, we shut down many of the tax loopholes which the wealthy people were using to escape paying taxes. We have put some taxes on large corporations that previously were not paying taxes. Certainly, we have increased some taxes, but I believe that the tax system is much fairer than previously.

We have cut spending. I would ask the hon. member to give me one example of his support for any expenditure cuts which this government has made. I cannot think of any. We have made a lot of cuts in expenditures. It seems to me that the opposition has opposed every single cut that we have recommended.

The government has cut its spending. We have reduced the size of the Public Service. A third way we have reduced our deficit and our debt is by economic stimula-

tion. Since this government has taken over, there have been 1.6 million new jobs created in Canada. This obviously means that is a great deal of expansion in Canadian industry. Many of these jobs are employing women.

I would like to hear the member give an example of the types of deficit reduction which our government has introduced which they are supporting. We have heard nothing but criticism and negative ideas, and I would like him to tell the House just what they would support in the way of deficit reduction?

Mr. Volpe: Mr. Speaker, I hope you will allow me extra time in order to satisfy the member from British Columbia. Since he has asked a comprehensive question, I do not want him to leave this House without getting all of the answers.

He has been listening diligently. I know that he wants to understand what the impact of some his government's initiatives are. I have already pointed to the increase in the public debt, which he has acknowledged. The member spoke about job creation. Seventy per cent of the jobs that this government is taking credit for are low paying service sector type jobs.

I do not think he wants to suggest that many of those jobs go to women. We are fighting for pay equity and for improving the lot of all people in Canada, including that of women, who are capable of doing a lot more than some of those low paying service sector type jobs that he would foist upon them.

I have pointed out in the House—and the hon. member was here to listen—that the Canadian economy has lost, not gained, nearly 200,000 jobs over the last year. Both the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have admitted this. That is under its major initiative of free trade. Those are not my statistics. They come from the hon. member's caucus colleagues, the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance. Show up at caucus and you will get that information.

What is worse, under the initiatives of this government, over the course of the last two years the Canadian economy has lost 180,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector. Those were permanent jobs that paid well over \$10 an hour. By providing that kind of employment to Canadians, it gave this government an opportunity to raise revenues from people who were productive.