

The Budget—Mr. Bird

[Translation]

However, on occasion there may be mitigating circumstances which I feel, as your Speaker, I should take into account in order to respect the spirit of this Standing Order as well as its most literal interpretation.

In my ruling of September 30, 1987 I said:

The Chair has allowed and may well continue to allow sufficient comment when the application is made so that the position of the member is clear.

Some written applications do not provide enough detail for the Speaker to know precisely what the member wants to raise and why. Others are too long and detailed and the member, rather than reading, should give only a concise summary.

As Speaker, I feel it is important to reiterate that *no argument or discussion* is allowed in presenting the statement.

[English]

I can certainly understand that Hon. Members care deeply about these requests and may from time to time stray beyond what the rules envision. In the interests of fairness, particularly since the Government does not have an opportunity to present any counter arguments during an application for an emergency debate, I will, of course, use this opportunity to again remind Members of the rule and will be vigilant in ensuring that Members do not stray from these guidelines.

I thank the Hon. Minister of Justice for raising this matter and thereby allowing me to bring this issue to the attention of Members. I hope that I can count upon the support of all Hon. Members in this matter.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government; and of the amendment of Mr. MacLaren (p. 1095).

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton): Mr. Speaker, I feel sure that it is clear to all Hon. Members that a strong

economy is fundamental and paramount to the kind of country and quality of life which Canadians desire to build and sustain.

Both history and current events present clear evidence that economic strength is the key to high standards of living, to political stability and to peace, whereas economic weakness is the prelude to poverty, oppression, political chaos and even war.

There are two pillars to a strong economy for which firm foundations must be laid. The first is a dynamic, creative and competitive productivity led by our traditional skills as a world trading nation, and our move into the free trade environment with the United States is a major step in that direction.

The second pillar is a disciplined control of the government deficit and debt. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak about this second subject today.

Over the past 20 years, as we in Canada have increasingly lived at a standard beyond our means and as we have watched the relentless process of deficit financing borrow from our future, a great many Canadians have truly begun to fear that we are on a path toward financial self-destruction. One of those concerned Canadians has been the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) who will earn and deserve the historical credit for being the first Finance Minister to confront those disastrous directions and to start to turn them around.

This 1989 Budget, which we are now debating, is not the beginning of the Government's resolve toward financial responsibility, rather it is a continuation. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, an intensification of the new directions which were expressed in the Minister's first Budget in November, 1984. At that time, with the Conservative Government just newly elected, he reported to Canadians the state of the country's financial affairs, a deficit inherited from the previous administration of \$38 billion, a total net national debt of \$199 billion and interest payments that year of \$22 billion. The Minister of Finance warned Canadians at that time that unless we began to put our fiscal house in order the burden of debt would continue to mount rapidly in the future. We are on a very dangerous treadmill.

• (1510)

Just over six months later, in May, 1985 the Government announced in its first full Budget plans to cut that deficit by nearly \$4 billion, reducing it to \$34 billion. That was the beginning of Conservative policies for financial