

*The Budget*

The government made the wisest choice in deciding to cut spending which Canadians had been requesting for months.

These cuts will enable us not only to reduce the deficit and to cut taxes, but also to pay a social dividend to Canadians and Canadian families.

Madam Speaker, following the last Speech from the Throne, the Conservative caucus committee on family issues, chaired by Al Johnson, set out to find ways of providing support for families. What the committee recommended was simple enough. Government was to make the tax system simpler and fairer in order to respond to the needs of families.

The work of our caucus committee was not in vain. The Minister of Finance did take its recommendations into account. In fact, several very major proposals regarding the family are included in the budget.

For one thing, it makes the tax system fairer for married couples. Starting in 1993, common law couples will be treated the same as married couples for the purposes of the tax system, thus eliminating any past discrimination against married couples.

Then the budget proposes a major reform of the present family benefit system to make it simpler, better targeted and more generous toward lower income families.

This does not put an end to the universality of social services, rather it focuses our efforts on families most in need. This is a question of fairness and social justice.

With his budget, the Minister of Finance clearly shows that our government is responding to the needs of Canadian families. I also see in this budget, Madam Speaker, a package which will allow the economy to reach cruising speed again. A government can no longer artificially prime the economy by throwing money right and left. This was tried by the previous government, in the early 80s, with the catastrophic results we now know.

A responsible government can no longer afford such measures. Economic success cannot come from expedients leading nowhere and too often tried by others.

The citizens of Joliette and Canadians in general know that an increase in spending would mean a larger debt, and that a larger debt would lead to tax increases. This is

not the way my constituents want the government to follow.

The 1992 budget reflects the good suggestions received from Canadians by the government during pre-budgetary consultations. This budget provides Canadians and Canadian businesses with the means to achieve a strong and sound economic recovery.

Personal income taxes will be cut. The reduction in the general surtax will affect more than 14 million taxpayers who will enjoy increased purchasing power.

The Home Buyers Plan will allow Canadians to use their RRSPs to buy or build a home, which will make it easier for people to own their own homes and at the same time stimulate the construction industry.

The budget also contains a number of measures to encourage initiative and productive investment. These measures will encourage the development of the private sector which, after all, is the sole real source of economic growth and job creation.

Small business is included in this budget as well. First of all, the Small Business Financing Program will help small businesses in financial difficulty. In addition, the ceiling for loans to individual small businesses under the Small Business Loans Act will be increased to \$200,000.

Madam Speaker, the federal budget was well received by the business community. The president of the Quebec Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Denis Mercier, said the budget was very good, while the ex-president and now administrator of the *Conseil du patronat du Québec*, Mr. Sébastien Allard, said the budget was responsible, considering the current economic and financial situation.

In concluding, I would like to comment briefly on the role of the budget committee of the Quebec Conservative caucus in preparations for the federal budget. In recent months, the committee I had the honour to co-chair with Senator Bolduc examined the government's spending programs.

In a report submitted to the Minister of Finance, we suggested ways to bring public spending into line. Upon reading the budget, I was delighted to see that the Minister of Finance included several of our recommendations, and by the way, we fully intend to submit another report some time next year.