

The Budget—Mr. Casey

increased that much since last October 30 when the election was on?

The Government said at that time that it had the deficit under control. There was no problem with the deficit. Every nickel had been accounted for. How much of each dollar was going to allay the debt on the same day that the Prime Minister announced that he was going to build a new prison in Quebec where everyone agreed a prison was not needed, nor were the roads needed that were going to be built into that prison? It was said that it is going to cost this country millions of dollars a year from now until eternity to service that prison when it wasn't even needed in the first place. What was the deficit on the day that the Prime Minister announced in Winnipeg last October that he was going to provide for 200,000 day care spaces? He announced that he would put it in place during the first session of the new Parliament. The first session of the new Parliament has come and gone, and I have not seen anything to indicate that the 200,000 new day care spaces are there.

My question then to my hon. friend is: Why is there this great concern now, five months or thereabouts after there seemed to be an abundance of money to offer new services, five months after the Prime Minister advised the country that new programs were in the offing as soon as this Government was re-elected? If you had been in the audience on that day in Winnipeg and were concerned about day care, I am sure you would have gone away thinking, yes, they are going to put that program in place. The idea being, hopefully anyway, that you would vote for that Party that made the announcement. So what was the situation on October 30—we are talking now about 31 cents on the dollar—when the Prime Minister announced the day care program which he was going to proceed with as soon as he was re-elected?

Mr. Casey: I appreciate your question. I understand there is a policy here that we go easy on new Members when they make their first speech, and I really appreciate how you have gone easy on me.

I cannot answer your question on the deficit. You have to understand that I have only been in politics a very short time, but even I remember the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) talking about reduction of the deficit from the day he was elected. I know for a fact that he has reduced government spending year after year for the last

four years. I think it is a tremendous accomplishment because I cannot name one single business in the private sector that has accomplished the same thing. Certainly, the goal is to reduce the deficit which they have done on actual government spending, the increase in interest rates notwithstanding.

Mr. Corbett: Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague for a fine maiden speech in the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Corbett: It was indeed a tribute to the people who elected him who, I am sure, will continue to put their faith in his performance in the House of Commons in the years to come.

I would like to ask my colleague a question with reference to the Free Trade Agreement. Being an Atlantic Canadian myself, I know it must have weighed heavily on his mind, as it did on mine, during the last campaign. At that time we were well aware that in the years previous to 1984, when the Minister of Finance along with this Government was elected, that Atlantic Canada experienced a net deficit of jobs under a Liberal administration supported by an NDP Government that had made their bed well known in this country as being supportive of the Liberals and their negative policies with reference to Atlantic Canada. We saw the refreshing approach to the course of this country with reference to the Free Trade Agreement. In the few short years leading up to 1988 we saw in excess of 1.4 million jobs created in the nation, and probably in excess of 45,000 or 50,000 jobs created in Atlantic Canada alone. Indeed, that was a refreshing change.

• (1520)

Then the Government moved toward a Free Trade Agreement in the last 18 months. We in Atlantic Canada became extremely excited about the ramifications and the possibilities of what Atlantic Canada could become and how important that was. It was such a refreshing change from what we had been witness to over the previous administration which was supported by a New Democratic Party that was continuously playing lackey and lip-service to a Liberal Government.

For those reasons, I would now like my hon. colleague and friend from Nova Scotia to give us a short version of what he feels is the importance of the program which is