

*The Budget—Mr. Fisher*

goes to servicing the debt. That increases every year. Surely he understands that we have gone far enough.

He says that we have to continue spending in this and that area. Taking that to its logical conclusion, we must ask why we tax anybody. Why do we not just spend money and make everybody happy. That is really what the Hon. Member is saying.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but we are running overtime. Perhaps he would be allowed to complete his answer by unanimous consent. Is it agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We will proceed to debate. The Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher).

**Mr. Douglas Fisher (Mississauga North):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak in the Budget debate. I think this is a good Budget and a timely one. I believe it reflects the good progress we have made on economic recovery and it provides us with major advances on key social problems, especially on pensions, mortgages, and women's financial rights. It continues to strive for a simpler tax system, particularly for small business, and it provides extra relief for unemployed young people. It also creates more tax incentives for increased industrial productivity. Those are important themes and all are reflected in the Budget.

We achieved this kind of timely impact because of the wide consultation that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) undertook for the second time in preparing and presenting his material. The Minister of Finance and his colleague, the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. MacLaren), and all his other colleagues in various Departments of Government, criss-crossed the country in the months before the Budget, talking to interested groups in order to make sure that people in all regions had input into this document. In fact, Mr. Bernie Beckett from the St. John's Board of Trade was quoted on February 17, two days after the Budget, as saying "It is nice to see the consultative process with business". I agree with Mr. Beckett. It is an important reform that makes it possible for us to bring out a budget that is in tune with the expectations and capacities of the private sector.

It is important to note that this consultative process will not end when the Budget is finished. Each of the major proposals asked for better input before implementation. I think, for example, of the proposals for private pensions. They will affect not only the pensioner but also the employer. So we need to have feedback from the private sector before final implementation. The same is true in the home building industry with our proposals for the mortgage insurance plan, and it is also true of our recommendations for an employee profit-sharing plan.

We do not intend to make an idea into law the day after the Budget. We intend to repeat the consultative process and invite interested voices and informed voices back for further input into the final documents.

I should like to give a plug to the consultative process that the Finance Committee of the House of Commons has employed in the past two Budgets, the six and five Budget and the special recovery Budget. It has worked on tax concessions involved in those Budgets. Before the legislation was introduced, the Finance Committee examined the documents, heard witnesses, talked to experts from various Departments, and then made recommendations to the Minister. I should like to see this process continue because I think it is an intelligent use of abilities of Members of Parliament. We have seen some dramatic improvements in the actual legislation as a result of it. I hope that the present Chairman of the Finance Committee, the outstanding Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson), and the Minister will continue this process with the current Budget.

I must say that this is the fourth Budget on which I have worked as Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Speaker. If I may be allowed a personal reflection, I should like to say that it is one of my most satisfying experiences as a parliamentarian. I have had the opportunity to work with the Minister of Finance since September, 1982, and have enjoyed my affiliation with him. His energy is boundless. I especially appreciate the way he is willing to go across Canada to listen to other Canadians and bring their ideas to the House of Commons. This is one of his outstanding strengths and it has been reflected in two very good Budgets, that of April, 1983 and that of February, 1984.

Of the four Budgets I have seen, each has had a special characteristic. The November, 1981 Budget created enormous controversy with its tax reform. After that controversy died down and after all the dust had settled, we were left with some of the very significant benefits in our tax system that were introduced by the then Minister of Finance. As people look back on that Budget they usually overlook those benefits. They forget that the tax rate was significantly lowered in that Budget, that we not only cleaned up some of the problem areas but we passed the savings back to the taxpayer in the form of a lower rate. From the bottom of the tax scale to the top, the rates dropped. Today Canadians pay less tax because of that reform, and as the controversy dies the benefit will remain.

I had the opportunity to work on the six and five Budget. That was an imaginative effort that unified Canadians and brought them together in the fight against inflation. The six and five program provided Canadians with a management target that they could use in their personal lives to measure whether they were helping the fight against inflation or hurting it. Canadians took up the six and five program as their personal standard. They were able to identify with the elements of the program. As it ends in this Budget we can look back at it with great pride and realize that it has gone a long way toward unifying the economy and helping the fight against inflation.

Last April we saw the special recovery Budget. This was an effort to attack the weakest sectors of the economy and bring strength to them. It was a time to give the economy some kind of immediate stimulus until the private sector had the confidence and strength to take over. I think the present Budget