

*The Budget—Mr. De Bané*

we directed a good deal of our effort toward that end. We felt we could have cut the budgetary deficit in half by 1983-84. This government, which promised to work on cutting the deficit, has broken that promise again. The deficit is up by \$3.6 billion. It now costs some \$12 billion per year in interest payments alone on the national debt—more than the total federal government budget when the Prime Minister took office in 1968. Canada cannot go on in this way.

In conclusion, I would like to quote a statement made by Mr. William Simon, former secretary of the treasury of the United States of America to a committee:

You asked, Mr. Chairman, about the consequences of deficits. But we all know what they are. We know that neither man nor business nor government can spend more than is taken in for very long. If it continues, the result must be bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, we as a nation will become bankrupt. We already have a bankrupt government.

[Translation]

**Mr. De Bané:** Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** As suggested by the Minister for Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. De Bané) the Chair will call it six o'clock.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until eight o'clock this evening.

At 5.57 p.m. the House took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. When the debate was interrupted at six o'clock, the hon. Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. De Bané) had been given the floor.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to have an opportunity to take part in the debate on the budget brought down by my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) because it is surely one of the most complete statements on a policy which will certainly surely characterize the various aspects of the Canadian economy during the next decade, not only at the energy, fiscal and budgetary levels, but also at the industrial, technological and regional levels.

If Canada has a special characteristic compared with other countries it is because implicitly or explicitly as a result of its size and its space since 1867, the federal government has recognized that it should assume a responsibility to enable all Canadians to take advantage of the opportunities available in this country. And what is more remarkable in the budget

brought down by the Minister of Finance is perhaps that for the first time it had such a regional character.

Several of the measures proposed by the Minister of Finance are directed to specific areas, whether the centre, the north, the west, the province of Quebec or the maritimes. Personally, as the minister in charge of regional development, I mean to alleviate regional inequalities, for I know as well as any other hon. member to what extent one's quality of life and standard of living are largely conditioned by the area in which one lives. And if one resides away from the areas where most of the economic activities are concentrated, one, more often than not, is very likely to get fewer advantages and benefits than one would be otherwise entitled as a Canadian.

As an MP who comes from one of the less-favoured areas, the riding of Matapédia-Matane, I know what disastrous effects the problems of unemployment, of per capita incomes that are lower than the national average, can have on the morale of the men, women and children who live there.

If there is anything that is obvious to every one of us, it certainly is that the opportunities for development, for growth and employment, are, to a large extent determined by the area where one lives. There are several areas where the opportunity to earn about as much as the average fellow-citizen is just about non-existent.

That is why I am so pleased with the measures introduced by the Minister of Finance in his budget: several of them are designed specifically to reduce regional disparities.

I do not want to spend time on all those measures, but may I be allowed to say that, generally speaking, the economy and the principles on which this budget is built, to my mind are based on common sense, courage and justice; in addition, they avoid all sorts of solutions that are as erroneous as they are simplistic. As I said at the beginning, this budget represents the gigantic effort of undertaking a new policy whose magnitude in the field of energy will mean, not only security of supplies for Canadians, not only justice for Canadians, regardless of whether they live in the producing or the consuming provinces, but also the opportunity for Canadian industry to get off to a fresh start.

● (2010)

[English]

For many months I have been speaking with my colleagues on both sides of the House about the great and immediate need for their ideas and assistance in improving the federal response to the economic development needs and goals of the people of Canada. There is a need for concerted action by the Government of Canada to respond to the diverse opportunities open to Canadians across the country. Such action requires more than the attention and efforts of one agency or department. It must be the result of the efforts of all members of the House and of all the agencies and departments of the federal