



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Deepak Obhrai, MP
Calgary East

Media Release

For Immediate Release

June 4, 2013

Excerpts from the speech in the House of Commons by Deepak Obhrai, M.P. and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on Bill C-60, Economic Action Plan 2013

(June 3, 2013 – Ottawa) Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to the budget bill.

Let me begin by saying that the leadership provided by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance since 2006, when we formed the government, has drawn world attention.

As the PS of Foreign Affairs, I travel all over the world doing my job. The question I am often asked is, “How did you guys in Canada do it? How did you avoid the serious recession?”

As we know, countries all around the world, in the Euro zone and elsewhere, are facing a serious recession. The question we are asked is how we avoided it considering that our largest neighbour to the south also went through a very serious recession.

It was through the strong leadership provided by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance during these years.

Let me just point out one factor with respect to Governor Mark Carney. Governor Carney provided strong leadership during the period of this recession and has earned world-wide respect, so much so that the Bank of England, a country facing a very serious recession, has hired him to chart its economy through this recession. That is a great honour for Canada and speaks volumes to the leadership that was provided by the Minister of Finance and Governor Carney. I take this opportunity to wish him bon voyage and the best of luck in the U.K.

The world has acknowledged our fiscal leadership despite the NDP's anti-growth and trade agenda.

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Let me highlight what this government has done and talk about the good news since we have come in and why the world is so impressed by us.

The first item on our action plan is to return to a balanced budget. I am pleased to say that we are track to balance the budget by 2015 and 2016. That is quite a considerable achievement.

How did we do that? By reducing wasteful departmental spending, reducing travel costs through the use of technology, by continuing to control public service compensation, and eliminating tax loopholes that benefit a select few.

We are helping businesses succeed and grow in the global market. We are providing tax relief for the manufacturers, helping small business expand through the small business fund, increase the lifetime capital gains exemption, and supporting mining exploration.

Let me also say that this government is strongly supporting families and communities. We are supporting families through an enhanced new tax relief for families. We are investing in communities. Nearly \$1.9 billion over five years to create more affordable housing.

We are supporting and honouring our veterans by enhancing the funeral and burial program by simplifying it and more than doubling the current funeral services reimbursement rate from \$3,000 to \$7,000.

We are promoting strong aboriginal communities by strengthening opportunities for on-reserve economic development, improving safety for aboriginal peoples, and enhancing health care services on reserves.

Not only that, our economic action plan is also connecting Canadians with available jobs.

In my riding of Calgary East, people are looking for jobs so that they can provide for their children and growing families. This government is providing more job opportunities for people through the Canada skills grant. We are also strengthening the apprenticeship program, and supporting job opportunities by providing tools to persons with disabilities, youth, aboriginals, and recent immigrants to help them find a job.

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As well, we are investing in a long-term infrastructure plan, with over \$70 billion over 10 years for a new building Canada plan, including \$32.2 billion over 10 years for a community improvement fund, \$14 billion for a new building Canada fund, \$1.25 billion for the renewal of the P3 Canada program, and \$6 billion under current infrastructure programs for provinces, territories and municipalities.

We are continuing to invest in world-class research and innovation. I am pleased to say that I have taken many trips with the governor general who has been promoting education links around the world.

We have seen, first-class, what Canada can offer to other countries, both in research and innovative.

Let me also say that it is very important we have a strong health care system and social security network. I am happy to say that there have been record transfer supports for social and health services for my province of Alberta, and it will receive significant support through the federal transfers in 2013-14.

Let me also talk for a minute about supporting seniors. Seniors have spent their lives building this country. So it is natural that we do support them. Since 2006, over \$2.7 billion in annual tax relief has been provided to seniors and pensioners.

Not only that, we are very happy to say that we have expanded tax relief for home care services. We are better protecting seniors using financial services, in working with the banks. We are supporting palliative care services provided by the Palladium Foundation of Canada. We are encouraging a timely implementation of the pooled registered pension plan. We are assisting in construction and renovation of accessible community facilities.

All of this is part and parcel of plan 2013, a plan that will provide hope, direction and guidance so that we have a very strong foundation left in this country that will help propel us into the future.

This government will remain focused on the economic agenda. This government will look to the future so that our children have a bright future, and will see a strong Canada, economically and socially. Let us move forward. This government is providing the direction.

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