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Budget 2009

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Wednesday, January 28, 2009

THE SENATE

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FINANCE

BUDGET 2009

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, yesterday, in response to my question, the Leader of the Government in the Senate told us, at page 16 of the *Debates of the Senate*:

The government has been projecting a surplus for this current fiscal year, not a deficit.

Unfortunately, this is not the situation. Less than two hours after the minister had reassured honourable senators, her cabinet colleague, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, announced in the other

place that for the current fiscal year of 2008-09, there would be a deficit of \$1.1 billion. What happened in two hours? As a member of cabinet, did the Leader of the Government in the Senate not receive a briefing yesterday about the contents of the budget? If she did get such a briefing, why did she provide the chamber with erroneous information on such a basic budgetary issue?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, I would have to check exactly what I said. Perhaps I misunderstood the question. I was referring to the state as of the economic update in November. It was clear that at that time — and it was an economic update, not a budget or a stimulus package — the government was in surplus.
