

Supply

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating the hon. member for Willowdale on using his allotted time to speak French. I think this is quite remarkable, and I think the hon. member is to be commended on his efforts to speak a language that is not his own in this House.

I would like to comment on some aspects of his speech. In fact, although the hon. member for Willowdale is a member of the opposition, his speech could have been made by a member on this side of the House. All the objectives and the principles he wanted to put forward are typical of programs the government supports wholeheartedly. We agree we should make an effort to increase manpower training. We agree Canadian citizens are overtaxed. We cannot go on increasing taxes. We agree a partnership should be developed between workers, the private sector and the government. All these principles are admirable, but the first item on the government's agenda is to stop further increases in the deficit we inherited in 1984, a deficit to which this government has not added a single penny. The current deficit has two components: the \$225 billion, more or less, we inherited from the Liberal government the day after the election in 1984, and the compound interest.

I would like to raise another point with the hon. member, before asking any questions or suggesting he help us find answers. The day after the election in 1984, the Liberal Party left us another legacy as well: an operating deficit. The honourable member will recall that at the end of the 1984-85 fiscal year, the federal government's current account was in the red to the tune of nearly \$16 billion. Today, that same account, thanks to the efforts of this government, now has a surplus of nearly \$15 billion. We first had to deal with this current account deficit in order to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order. Since the period for questions and comments is very short, only five minutes, it is only fair to allow the hon. member for Willowdale, equal time for his answer.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to thank the hon. member for Manicouagan for his

question. First of all, as far as the deficit is concerned, this government was elected in 1984. At the time, the national debt was \$170 billion. Eight years later, at this very moment, the national debt is \$450 billion, under a Conservative majority government. This is not our fault. However, businessmen and homeowners know that when you have to buy something, you have to invest in the future. Whether we are talking about buying a house or a factory, sometimes you have to borrow money to pay back the cost of the loan.

Now, about youth training. This is an extremely important point. And investing in science and technology is also very important, we cannot overlook that either. We must invest in training for a prosperous future. Now is the time to invest in the things that count. That is the difference between this government and our party. How long is the government going to wait? Until the national debt reaches \$100 billion or \$200 billion? How long will it take? We must invest now.

• (1840)

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I too am glad to have the chance to participate in this supply motion involving \$48 billion-plus. Most likely for those watching television it is not one of the most exciting things. However, as some of us remember or know from our history, the whole essence of Parliament is the granting of supply, the granting of the dollars necessary to make the government work. It began with the old dukes and lords leaning behind the bushes in the meadow as they tried to restrain the King from fighting wars and doing all the things the King did. That is where we get the title "Speaker".

The lords and the dukes would send someone to speak to the King about supply and all of the vitals for war and the King's court: the cows, the horses, and all the ladies necessary to make the King's court work.

That was the beginning of supply. That is where we get the name Speaker because it was the Speaker who was sent by the dukes and the lords to talk to the King to say: "You should not go to war and fight the War of the Roses", or "You should not go and fight this war of the Crusades".