

Routine Proceedings

the government's financial reports since 1950. We can even go back to R. B. Bennett, who had an unsettling effect on Canada during difficult times, times when the Conservatives were in power.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and member for Trois-Rivières said the government had to save money, which is ludicrous when we realize that when his minister introduces a program, whether it is the GST or another tax program—since 1984 they introduced 33 different taxes—we know that every time they go and see their friends.

[*English*]

That is in the public relations section. It establishes its public relations programs and spends on books that are sent out to the whole community which say how good it is to be taxed by the Conservative government. It spends \$25 million or \$30 million on publications advertising that people are going to be taxed. Is this budgetary restraint?

Is it budgetary restraint when all the newspapers in Canada, no matter what the size, explain very thoroughly what the taxation is all about and what the latest details are on the taxes and so on? All the media discuss it. The present government talks about budgetary restraints and yet it will waste millions and millions in publishing and advertising its tax. It is trying to candy coat the tax situation to the public.

[*Translation*]

I think that is absolutely incredible! The talk on the government side is about saving money and budget cutbacks, but the fact is that they are constantly wasting money.

Every time we discuss the national debt or the deficit—we were talking about this earlier—they overlook the fact that their average annual deficit since 1984 has been around \$25 to \$30 billion. Tory members who brag about their skills as financial administrators are on very shaky ground, considering the fact that they spend more than they collect in revenue every year. They rise in the House to talk about budget cutbacks and financial constraints, and meanwhile they are wasting money.

As a member of the public accounts committee, I have heard any number of horror stories from our Auditor General. Our two Tory members forgot to mention the \$200 million that was supposed to be spent on oil exploration in Nova Scotia a few years ago, but was used instead to build two bridges. Then they realized there were no roads leading to the bridges or leading away from them. Two bridges were built. One wonders why. Next a road was built through a forest, right in the middle of nowhere. Again, why did they do that? Whose forest was it? Did this enhance the value of the forest or of the surrounding land? Good question. In any case, it was a waste of money.

The only gas exploration they could justify was when they gave research funds to the dental arts faculty at a community college. I imagine the teachers found some gas in the teeth of the good people of Nova Scotia. It is ridiculous to hear these people talking about saving money and blaming the Liberal Party and going back seven, eight or nine years, but no more. I would strongly advise the Tories, when they start looking for historic scapegoats, to stop being selective and go back a little further. Go back to Clark and Diefenbaker and maybe R. B. Bennett, and you will really be in for some horror stories.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the report from the public accounts committee, I must tell you that most of its members are from the government side. We voted on the report because the government has a majority on the committee. The recommendations in the report were not just those of the New Democrats and Liberals. We were a minority on that committee and still are. We did not make up the stories found in the report. It was prepared as a result of the Auditor General's report. In referring to the Income Tax Act which was changed to introduce a research and development income tax credit, the Auditor General mentioned that the department had estimated a loss of \$100 million. In reality, it was \$2.5 billion, a much larger amount. I am sure that the two members of the party in power will agree that the difference between \$100 million and \$2.5 billion is not imaginary. It is a mighty big difference. A \$100 million loss becomes a \$2.5 billion loss. I asked the committee whether they had foreseen this \$2.5 billion loss or a \$100 million loss