

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** If the hon. member wants an answer for his question, he had better put it.

**Mr. Pickard:** How can he say with a straight face that he is a reasonable manager? How would he even admit to being a manager at all when he realizes the financial crisis it has put this country into?

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, every time a newcomer to the Chamber opens their mouth, some of us who have been around a while are really tempted to give them a piece of history which the chairman of public accounts will know.

We were a government for nine months and we got defeated. The total accumulated debt in all of history, just for the member's interest, in the 1980 election was \$68 billion. Four years later it was \$220 billion.

**An hon. member:** Now figure the interest on it.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, do you want to just do the percentage increase that the Liberal Party managed in four years?

How did you get so quickly from the balanced budgets in 1971-72? You had the current leader of the Liberal Party who was the finance minister for a little while and, man, was that a disaster. That was an unmitigated disaster.

But \$68 billion to \$220 billion is an increase of 200 per cent in four years. That is a 50 per cent increase annually in the accumulated national debt of this country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to comment on the public accounts committee report on the disbandment of the Department of Finance's tax evaluation division.

I listened very carefully to the speeches made by government members this morning and found that they were ridiculing the parliamentary system as a whole and

in particular the principle of evaluating the work done in this House of Commons and the decisions made here.

The Minister of Finance has waited until 1987 to set up a committee—

**An hon. member:** A division.

**Mr. Bellemare:** —or a division responsible for evaluating the department's programs. We know that the Auditor General had been recommending since 1983 that the department set up a program evaluation committee and, in fact, considered it absolutely essential. The following year, the Department of Finance introduced a tax credit system and estimated, not through an arm's length evaluation, that the loss in tax revenue would be roughly \$100 million. We know that this loss in fact amounted to \$2.3 billion.

I listened to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières, who says an evaluation function does exist within the department. If there is one, it is not independent. We are going back to the problems we had in 1983-84, the problems raised by the Auditor General, when individual evaluations were carried out, not at arm's length and without using accepted procedures. That is how you put the country in deep financial trouble.

The hon. member for Calgary West had fun trying to take to task opposition members, particularly the newer ones.

• (1230)

He tried to make fun of us. He tried to be funny. I think the hon. member is irresponsible when he tries to laugh off what is said by new members of this House. He mentioned our national debt of \$400 billion. He says it was the Liberal Party's fault, and that in 1984, when this government came to power, it had a debt of about \$150, \$170 or \$175 billion. The figures seem to change every time a minister or a government member rises in this House! The debt was certainly around \$170 billion, according to the government's former Minister of Finance.

They always say it is the Liberals' fault. They say they inherited a debt of around \$175 billion in 1984 and that it is now up to \$400 billion because of the interest on the debt. I think the government's economists tend to forget their mathematical and historical facts.

We must not forget that if we had a debt of around \$175 billion in 1984, that debt was not only a legacy of the Liberal Party but also of two previous Conservative governments. Mr. Clark's government added to the debt, as did Mr. Diefenbaker's. If you want to check, look at