

Parliament have done, one does so at some personal cost in terms of time and other dimensions. I chose to do so, and I think most of the new members on this side of the House chose to do so because we were concerned about this nation and about the direction in which it was heading.

I understand that it is parliamentary tradition to be allowed a little latitude on the subjects to which one chooses to address oneself during the throne speech debate and the budget debate. I am going to digress from the budget for a moment but I will return to it.

I want to deal with something which has caused me increasing concern as I sit here day after day. We on this side have been accused of being no different from the previous government. I think one of the differences, which has been long in the planning and is taking some time in the execution because of obstructionist tactics from the other side, is the reform of the institution of Parliament. In the last week or two we have been treated with increasing frequency to those kinds of tactics which delay, which waste the time of members of the House, which waste the attention of the Canadian people, the long-term consequences of which are for Canadians to lose faith in their political process.

An hon. Member: They waste the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Hawkes: This government is concerned about changing the institution of Parliament and, after having sat in this House for only two months and three days, I understand even more completely why that is a priority of this government. In that connection I would just like to review our two-month record with respect to the change of this institution. The most important piece of legislation which is before this House and before the Canadian people is the freedom of information bill. If we, as Canadians, are dependent upon the interpretation of information which flows from the other side of the House, we are going to be bankrupt of ideas, bankrupt of the kind of information which will enable us to make solid decisions. If we pass the freedom of information bill in this House, and then put the information out into the public domain, we can let Canadians decide who is telling the truth and who is playing a magician's game.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hawkes: We believe in that principle over on this side of the House, and I believe our actions give credence to that principle.

Last night we had our Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) stand before us and lay out for the information of the Canadian people, for the members of this House, a five-year budgetary projection, not a six-day wonder, not a six-month wonder, but a five-year budget projection. That is what we laid out in the House of Commons. And that is an important principle for the kind of stability which this nation needs.

Members opposite might ask: what is so important about that? Where is the courage in that kind of step? Well, Mr. Speaker, I say to the people of Canada and to the members of

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this House that in the next five years we are going to have those numbers thrown back at us. They are projections which represent the best guess we can make today as to the state of the economy over the next five-year period of time. As is true of all guesses, not all of them will be correct. And members opposite will take advantage of that and attempt to throw those figures back in our faces. But I say that the Minister of Finance, and this government, have the courage to say to the Canadian people, "This is the way we think it will go." We had that same kind of courage in March, April and May of this year.

Based on the information which was provided to us we laid out to the Canadian people the kind of steps we felt we would be able to take, the kind of things we felt were necessary to undertake. And today we are getting some of those things flung back in our faces. In some cases I welcome the opportunity to debate them.

One other thing I would like to say before I turn to the budget itself is that we have had another historic precedent set by the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Clark) in recent days. The Prime Minister chose to voluntarily appear before a committee of the House of Commons to defend his personal budget. The accountability of the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars begins on this side of the House. From the Prime Minister it flows to the cabinet, and it continues to be a concern of each and every one of us who sit on this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hawkes: As I learn my parliamentary responsibilities in the ten standing committees of the House, and listen to question period, I hear many pleas from the other side of the House to spend money. I cannot recall, in two months and three days, a single suggestion of how to save money or how to raise the increased taxes to pay for what they propose to spend.

Mr. Speaker, the information provided to me as a member of Parliament, which is relevant to this budget and to the Public Accounts of Canada, is a stack of information which in reality is about 12 inches high. It is difficult material to comprehend. It was made available to us yesterday. If it is difficult for a member of Parliament to comprehend, I can imagine how confused the Canadian people must be in many cases about the provisions of the budget and about the state of the economy in Canada.

I would like to try to pin it down to some fundamental aspects that we should be debating with great gusto. The New Democratic Party is clearly on record as favouring a larger deficit. The Liberals talk about our "bizarre fixation" with the deficit.

An hon. Member: Bookkeeping matters!

Mr. Hawkes: I would like to ask the Canadian people to look at their family budgets. If one makes \$500 a month and spends \$600 a month, I ask the Canadian people: how long can you continue to do that? If you make \$500 and you spend