

evaluation is all the more important in the current context of budgetary restraint since research optimization is now obligatory”.

That says that we make good common sense decisions based on accurate information. That is how to get the best bang for the buck. When we listen to headline writers who are never in this Chamber we should be warned that it is bad quality information. Every single person who writes headlines in this country is not familiar with the context. They are trying to sell newspapers, not pass on information.

When people write paragraphs about who looks angry in the context of a front-page news story, and they were not even present, they are writing fiction or hearsay information. I will bet dollars to donuts.

I read the statement of the member for Winnipeg North very carefully. I listened to him when he spoke on decorum in this House. I listened very carefully because it was an excellent, first rate presentation by a relatively new member. He never said in *Hansard* that he heard anything. He has never said anywhere else, as far as I know, that he heard anything. He was told. He rose on a point of order because of something somebody else told him.

You can see it visually and you can see it in his own words. Then we can get to some sense of reality, some sense of accuracy. It was impossible to hear what is alleged to have been said because it was never said. However, people listen to each other, rumours get started, and rumours get perpetuated.

It is part of our problem in this Chamber. If we are going to criticize maybe I can ask the chairman of the public accounts committee when we are going to get a report from the public accounts committee recommending that the House of Commons have an evaluation research unit to look into some things, for example, how much money some Ottawa area members spend on travel in their own constituency which came out in public accounts documents yesterday. It looks obscene on the surface. There may be a good explanation. Maybe we should have program evaluation research in this unit, in this place, if we are going to say that we need it in lots of other places.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put a couple of questions to my friend and colleague. His prior incarnation was as a psychologist. I think he still practises the trade on us sometimes.

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As I listened to him today there was a mild criticism of the fact that the committee moved concurrence in that report today. The member for Calgary West says the government has not had a chance to study the report or to reply. We all know that it will reply within the required time, which I believe is 150 days.

I want to make the point to him that the government, in the person of the Comptroller General who is a public servant under the Treasury Board, came to the committee and told us that this action was taken by the Department of Finance very quietly and secretly in the summer without even telling the Comptroller General. We were quite quite taken aback by this practice.

The Comptroller General came into the committee and said: “It is not my preferred option”. We thought he was speaking for the government. At least I believe he speaks for the government. I believe he acts and looks after the interests of all Canadians as a servant of Treasury Board and therefore as a servant of the government.

I do not think the criticism that this report was moved today rather than 100 days hence is a very valid criticism. I think the member should use some creative thinking here. We are trying to stop other departments from copying what the Department of Finance did. Copy-cats do exist. We do not want the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans, Revenue Canada, Environment Canada or any other important department—and there are is a whole slew of them—to avoid this controlled program, controlled by the Comptroller General and by Treasury Board, of evaluating their programs.

That is the first point. On the other, he challenged me to ask a question in the House today. He knows that I would love to ask a question in the House today because there is a very serious reservation made by the Auditor General in the Public Accounts of Canada—not by me, not by a House of Commons committee but by a servant of Parliament—to the effect that if we accepted his recommendations, those reservations that the Auditor General has in the Public Accounts of Canada, the budgetary deficit for this year would be \$2 billion over and above what the government says it is.

I will quote directly from the Auditor General’s opinion: “If the government adjusted the financial statements for the matters reported in these reservations, the