

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I would first like to point out to the hon. member that when he raised this question on October 23, the Deputy Prime Minister did apologize to him for not sending a letter and wanted to assure us that the government wants the public accounts committee to be the watch-dog committee of the public purse.

As well, the committee can expect the same freedom and independence it has always exercised. Furthermore, as the committee continues to fulfil its important role, we would welcome any ideas, suggestions or otherwise to assist the government and the country in reducing its national debt.

I know the hon. member shares the view that we must find ways to reduce duplication in government and to find efficient methods to meet the program demands of Canadians. We as a government are constantly searching for ways to improve the delivery of programs. But, as he well knows, when an operation the size of the federal government spends approximately \$100 billion annually, it has an obligation and a duty to promote efficiency in our spending.

The Public Accounts Committee, which the hon. member chairs, is tasked with reviewing federal govern-

ment spending and with providing alternative ideas and new opportunities. I know the hon. member will be doing just that.

However, we should take time to look at our record. If we take away government spending to service the Liberal national debt, we will find that that the government has gone from a \$16 billion operating deficit in 1984-85 to a \$25 billion operating surplus in 1990-91.

That sounds impressive. The deficit will drop to \$28.5 billion this year. It will be cut to \$14 billion in three years and reduced further to \$10 billion in the next years.

Given these facts, I want to congratulate the Public Accounts Committee for its hard work in helping to achieve this impressive turn-around. In the same view, I know the hon. member who chairs the Public Accounts Committee would want to congratulate the government for providing leadership in getting government spending under control.

[Translation]

Madam Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 7.32 p.m.