

The Budget—Mr. Hopkins

spend \$50 million on a telescope. How sad does the member find it that the taxpayers of this country are paying some \$27 billion—that is twenty-seven thousand million dollars in interest—on a public debt which he helped create by supporting previous Ministers of Finance, including the current Leader of his Party? How sad does he find it? Can he do the mathematics and tell us how many telescopes we could buy if we did not have to pay that interest on the public debt? Can he do the mathematics on that and still feel sad about the enormous amount of \$27 billion to pay interest? That is why we do not have \$50 million for a telescope.

• (1710)

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, we have heard those statements in the House before. I could come back to the Hon. Member and simply say that we all know that the national debt has increased considerably under this Government. What is it, \$100 billion more or \$75 billion more? What will it be by the time we get that Party out of power? Who is going to pay the interest rate for its blunders? People in this country realize the Government has made blunders. Who is going to pay the interest on the millions of dollars which was spent on the prison in the Prime Minister's own riding? That must be borrowed money if the Government is still in debt and is still deficit budgeting. The Government is not balancing the Budget in this country, and it should not try to tell Canadians that it is.

The Hon. Member says we cannot find \$50 million for a telescope. It just goes to show that he does not know what he is talking about. We were not looking for \$50 million for any telescope. What we were looking for was \$12 million to upgrade the observatory and the total complex we already have. We were not going to go offshore and spend another \$10 million or \$12 million buying into a foreign-owned telescope which is not even on Canadian soil. What is wrong with the Government? Is it not happy with science and technology and the way Canadians have developed it in this country? I think the Hon. Member should be ashamed of himself for creating this kind of debt and scandal by going offshore to participate with someone else. We do not even have the observatory in this country now to invite our scientists back.

I want to repeat before I sit down again, because I do not think the Hon. Member was listening, that during the early years of the 1980s in this country and in the western world we saw the worst depression in 50 years.

Mr. Lanthier: Provoked by you.

Mr. Hopkins: Listen to the Hon. Member. He has opinions of grandeur if he thinks we created unemployment and recession in the United States, in Great Britain, West Germany and Japan. How silly can the Hon. Member be to think that. He will then stand up and say that Canada has no influence. He stands up in this House—I am sorry he does not, he speaks from the seat of his pants. He is saying Canadians are causing all this destruction. Come on.

Mr. Lanthier: You created the situation.

Mr. Hopkins: It was an international problem. If the Hon. Member wanted to be honest, he would admit it was an international problem. If the Hon. Member for York—Scarborough wanted to be honest, he would say it was an international problem with which we had to contend. The Liberal Government did contend with it, but it did not do so by riding on the backs of the poor and middle-income earners and the unemployed of this country. We looked after those people and that is why we are paying part of that interest today.

An Hon. Member: \$200 million worth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Let us have some order.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We have 10 minutes for questions and comments and there is a deliberate filibuster by the original speaker to stop us from asking very pertinent and relevant questions. The Hon. Member brings up the prison in the Prime Minister's riding. That prison is being built for two-thirds the cost per cell of the last prison built by the Hon. Member's Government in the Province of New Brunswick. He does not want that fact laid on the Table. He does not want to give us an opportunity to stand up and say that the Auditor General spoke about his sense of panic that the previous Government had created a situation where spending was out of control. Those are the things the Hon. Member is trying to filibuster about, and I think, on a point of order, he should be cut off and not be allowed to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We are going to pursue the question and comment period with the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney).

Mr. Daubney: Mr. Speaker, there are many matters on which I could comment in the Hon. Member's address. However, I would just like the record to be clear on the last point he made during the extended minute given to him with respect to the telescope.

He certainly left the House with the impression that it was a decision of this Government to participate in the Hawaiian telescope. That is not the case at all. I can tell him as a member of the Standing Committee on Science and Technology that that was a decision taken by the Government of which he was a supporter for many years, that of the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

I think it was in 1978 or 1979 that the then Government decided that Canada would participate in this very state of the art telescope high on a mountain top in the Hawaiian Islands. It is an excellent location from which to observe the stars, and I am not questioning the decision made by the Government of the day. However, I just want to point out to the Hon. Member that this was not an initiative of our Government. It was an initiative of the Government which he supported, and if he had concerns about it, he should have raised them at that time.