

*Routine Proceedings*

reasonable period of time at report stage and third reading". That is exactly what happens.

If that committee was televised, I do not think opposition members would be able to make those compromises. They would be seen to be co-operating with the government. Again, I say that whether or not I am in the opposition. If I were in the opposition the same pressure would be on me as an individual.

If we televise committees, then the power will have to move to a steering committee. That will mean we will spend far more time at steering committees where we will make those compromises. I would rather not do that. I would rather see us have a totally new orientation that would bring more influence and power back to this House, even where there is television. I think we could become less partisan if we had agreement on fixed hours for debates. Bills could still go off to a legislative committee where the technical changes could be made from the expert witnesses. They could come back here for the policy debates. If government had a fixed agenda, it would be much more amenable to accepting amendments from the opposition parties.

That is my perspective. I do not claim to be a total expert, but I feel strongly on that perspective.

I want to respond to the point made by the NDP members who feel that this channel should be provided free. It has often and long been the NDP model that something be free.

Canadians know that nothing is free. Under the principle of offering something for free, this nation built up a national debt that is now over \$400 billion. When we came to power the deficit was \$38 billion, \$22 billion of which was interest on the national debt, and \$16 billion was surplus spending on programs compared to what was being taxed from people. By borrowing \$16 billion, we were able to offer programs to people for free.

But the young people of this nation in particular surely realize today that nothing is free, and that in fact what we successfully did was to pass on to their shoulders this huge national debt that they are either going to have to

pay for directly by way of tax dollars, or by a very substantially reduced income and standard of living.

Madam Speaker, what would you and I think today if our grandparents had done to us what we have done to our children and grandchildren in a mere 20 years? The fact of the matter is that this country went from 1867 to 1968, fought two world wars, came through a major economic depression, purchased the west, developed the north, built roads to resources—developed the whole of this country—and the national debt was only \$18 billion. Maybe only six cents out of every tax dollar went to service that debt.

But in the last 20 years we have offered people a whole host of programs, all of which are very attractive and which we like to have. At the same time we have maintained low taxes in order to have a good cash flow in our pockets. For that we went out and paid too much for land if we were farmers, too much for businesses if we were business people and too much for our homes. The secret is that collectively we were borrowing it on the side and under the table from rich people who had lots of money who had nothing to do with it except lend it to the government. We borrowed it from people from other countries and we built up this debt. As I say, at first it was six cents to service the debt. In 1968, it was 12 cents. Then it went to 15, 20, 25 and 30 cents. Now 35 cents out of every tax dollar that comes in has to come right off the top to service the debt.

As I say, some people argue that we owe it to ourselves so it does not make a difference. It does make a difference because people with lots of money rather than investing it in plant and equipment and taking the risk of going belly-up, sit back and lend it to the government. They have a guaranteed rate of return. But that money is not then available for putting out into social programs or developing new mining ventures so our young people can get great jobs as engineers and technicians. It is just not available.

If our grandparents had done that to us, Madam Speaker, we would not have the very high standard of living we have today. I think it is really wrong what we did to our children and our grandchildren. Thus I make the point that when the NDP continue to offer to our fellow Canadians something for free, surely to goodness that concept has been totally discredited as, indeed, I