

Routine Proceedings

Return tabled.

[*English*]

Mr. Riis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to seek clarification from my hon. friend, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader in terms of the questions that are yet unanswered and are in contravention of the Standing Orders as a result because they are long past the 45 days required.

Could I ask my friend if he would indicate whether or not he has had a chance to consider the suggestion that as the questions are answered the answers be tabled during adjournment?

Mr. Cooper: No, Mr. Speaker. Since the hon. member last raised this issue I have been in my seat and have not had a chance to do those consultations, but I assure him I will.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Motions.

Mr. Hawkes: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, just before we come to motions.

Earlier I was tempted to rise when some Independents raised some questions about the costing of motions for parliamentary committees to travel.

I just want the House to know that in my riding my constituents are worried about paying salaries to those same members because they show up here so very seldom.

* * *

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

CONCURRENCE IN SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I move that the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presented to the House on Friday, November 1, be concurred in.

• (1110)

We could adopt the motion now, but I believe it would be appropriate for me to say a few remarks.

[*Translation*]

All members of the House will admit that if we want to make the best use of resources we must be able to measure the performance of programs. Such evaluations enable members of Parliament, public servants and Canadians at large to check whether the rationale, objectives and design of programs are satisfactory and to compare the desired and observed results.

Thanks to the program evaluation done at the Department of Finance, Parliament and Canadians have been better informed of how efficiently bureaucrats or civil servants, if you prefer, handle their tax dollars.

These performance evaluations are particularly important when budgets are tight. Canadians have never been asked to do so much to reduce the budget deficit. Because of these many constraints, future governments, of whatever party, will have difficulty fulfilling their mandate, for lack of resources.

Therefore it has never been so important for Canadians to know that the various government policies are justified and cost effective. Canadians want to be sure that they are getting their money's worth. That is clear and I think it is justified.

Taxpayers are increasingly reluctant to loosen the purse strings. They are wary of the excessive demands made by all governments. Never have the objectives of various tax measures been called into question so much. I am thinking of the Income Tax Act, remission orders, tax incentives for investment and the goods and services tax, to name only these.

The public accounts committee, which I chair, was therefore very surprised to learn that the Department of Finance was reorganizing the way it evaluates tax measures. The committee expressed great concern about the cavalier way that the department dismantled the tax evaluation division. Just an internal memo announced the reorganization of the important evaluation unit. A