

*Parliament*

**Mrs. Campagnolo:** Not a single tax dollar was spent.

**Mr. Beatty:** The minister says that not a single tax dollar was spent. It is fine if the money of Canadians is squandered by the government so long as it is not raised through the tax system! Mr. Speaker, that is not fine. When a Crown corporation is responsible for spending money, then parliament has a responsibility to make sure the money is handled wisely.

**Mrs. Campagnolo:** Mr. Speaker, a point of order. The hon. member opposite is fully aware that all Crown corporations are audited by the Auditor General as a regular course of events, so there is nothing new in what he is saying.

**Mr. Beatty:** I am delighted to see that the minister accepts my argument, Mr. Speaker. That is the point we were trying to make today during question period. The minister has not been forthcoming with information about how the money is being spent. Whether the money is raised through the tax system or not, Canadians have a right to expect that government organizations will handle it wisely and well. To suggest that because money raised by issuing lottery tickets as opposed to the tax system justifies waste would be ridiculous. I am sure the minister would not attempt to justify it that way either.

The minister says there is no waste. Today during question period she explained—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I do not think we should get into that debate. A motion is in front of us. We are not here to debate what took place in the question period or to examine the estimates of the hon. minister.

**Mr. Beatty:** Thank you for your intervention, Mr. Speaker. I should like to explain why I cited that particular example. It was to prove a point that I think runs throughout the Auditor General's report—that parliament does not have proper control over the activities of the government. This is the gist of the motion before the House and this is the argument I was making before the minister interrupted.

The theme that I want to return to is that we are charged with the responsibility to ensure that the money of Canadian taxpayers is properly spent, and we have not been discharging this responsibility. Everywhere we turn we find that impediments to the rules or structures, as mentioned in the motion, or intransigence on the part of the government, make it difficult for parliament to do that job.

Since the Auditor General's report was tabled a couple of weeks ago, I have attempted within the confines of the question period to raise questions about its findings. Obviously, this is one of the forums in which parliamentarians can ask questions about how the money is being spent. Anyone who has been present here knows that it has not been a happy experience. Parliament has had a hard time getting information from the government and basic changes will have to be made to ensure that we do get the information we need.

Let us consider what the Auditor General has to say about some of the areas he studied. He selected for a special audit 13 capital works projects, which were worth some \$700 million of a total capital works budget of \$10 billion. He found that 11 of

the projects lacked proper control of the way the money was being spent. In instance after instance he found that the taxpayers' money was being spent unwisely and that value for money was not received.

● (2052)

He noted that at the time these 13 capital works projects were approved by parliament their estimated value was going to be \$281,600,000, but by the time these 13 projects were finished the cost to the taxpayer was some \$699,700,000. The cost had more than doubled. The Auditor General concluded in this part of the study that the absence of appropriate controls calls in question not only the \$10 billion capital cost of current projects, but also operating and maintenance commitments that stretch decades into the future.

Surely this is a concern of parliament, and surely we have a responsibility to look into this. Let members on the other side say that the Auditor General was looking specifically for areas and flaws to complain about, but I put that question to the Auditor General. He responded that this was not the case. In the areas he audited he was looking at typical projects, not the extraordinary ones. He was not looking for horror stories. He knew that there were areas where he could find stories that would curl the taxpayers' hair, but this is not what he was looking for. He was looking for a selective group of examples which would give him an indication of how the government conducts its business. What did he find? He found in the case of the C. D. Howe building, the glass palace across the way in which the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce is located, that the Canadian taxpayer lost \$12 million because of one simple decision. This loss was caused by the government deciding to ask the developer, who built the building, to finance the project instead of the government financing it itself. That is a cost of \$12 million at the stroke of a pen. Surely the Auditor General has pointed out something that should be of concern to us.

In another part of his report the Auditor General conducted a study to determine whether the government programs were achieving the purpose for which they were designed. Surely this is a measurement we must make of whether tax money is being well used. The Auditor General in his conclusion of this study said:

A review of 23 programs in 18 departments has disclosed few successful attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. The scope and quality of effectiveness evaluation will have to be increased significantly before management, the government and parliament, each with its respective interests, can be reasonably informed on the achievements of public programs.

It is clear from what the Auditor General pointed out that within the system of spending in Canada there are major flaws, and that major reforms must be made before we can be satisfied that we have done our job.

I see, Mr. Speaker, you are rising to indicate that I have used my allotted 20 minutes. Let me conclude by saying that when we were elected to parliament we were charged with perhaps the most important responsibility that can be given to any citizen of Canada, and that is to act as a proxy on behalf of our constituents to ensure that their interests and the