

Supply

This is not just a ritual that we are going through. We are spending our taxpayers' dollars, that big number that I just mentioned. I am not going to repeat it.

Nowhere in the system is there now a method of looking at cost efficacy, of looking at the value for money spent. It just is not there. The resources are not there. The Auditor General mentioned it today and members at the committee I just mentioned discussed it and we are looking for ways. I do not know if we will succeed in quickly finding a solution.

I thought I would mention a series of thoughts that were generated in the 1988 election campaign. I had written some of them down. They are not all my own. It occurred to me and others at the time that what was needed was some mechanism like the mechanism provided by the Auditor General for Parliament in overseeing the public accounts. Perhaps a branch of the Auditor General's function would actually do management or efficacy audits and do it, not on a comprehensive basis because government is really too large.

There was some thought of creating within the Auditor General's office an efficacy audit function and suggestions that it be staffed by individuals seconded from the private sector on two-year contracts—it probably takes a half a year to learn what Ottawa is all about—and staff it with 25 or 30 individuals who deal with large numbers and management efficacy issues in the private sector. They would be seconded.

They would have two-year contracts or at least term contracts. They would target a particular ministry and monitor it for a period of time and provide at the end a report to Parliament dealing with the very issue of efficacy of management audit or value for money, not whether the government's policy direction was necessarily right or wrong, but whether or not the objectives achieved by the ministry were valuable in relation to the amount of money spent.

I think that Parliament ought to be looking at exactly a mechanism like that.

I want to close my remarks by commending to the House and to my colleagues here the search for improved mechanisms of accountability for government spending.

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Madam Speaker, I certainly listened with interest to the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River and as he said, there is no mechanism to verify the estimates. They go to the committees and the committees are controlled by the government and the votes are simply a formality. Here tonight we are going to vote on the whole and there is no mechanism to know where the money is being spent and whether it is efficiently spent or not.

It was interesting to listen to him when he mentioned the United States. He says at least there they have a mechanism where each item is reviewed by both houses, their Congress and Senate, so that there is much more responsibility on how money is spent.

We are taken for granted here. The government has its majority. It brings in the estimates and the money is spent. Even so, we listen to a lot about how we have a huge deficit and how the previous member, the member for Carleton—Charlotte, said we have taken control of our economy. He said we took control of the economy. I wonder how we can take control of the economy if we run a deficit of \$30 billion, if unemployment figures across the country vary from 11 per cent to 22 and 25 per cent in certain areas.

• (2130)

We have a huge unemployment rate. If we are not counting the people who are not on unemployment insurance but are already on welfare, it becomes an extremely high percentage of the population. We certainly have not taken control of the economy. We are really in a depression right now, and not even a recession.

The question arises: how can we change that situation? We can change it simply by having, as some members on this side of the House have suggested in the past, some capital spending on the part of the government. We stimulate the economy when it is on a downturn and we let it go when the economy is prosperous as it was in the past.

From 1984 the Conservatives had a real mandate to try to control the economy and to bring the deficit down. They have not done that and the member opposite knows it very well.

Mr. O'Kurley: Did it work in the province of Ontario to stimulate the economy?