

**Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-143 is only two pages in length but it speaks volumes about our current financial state in Canada.

Since the November, 1981 budget when the 1982-83 fiscal deficit was estimated to be \$10 billion, we have seen an incompetent Government plundering our Treasury and watched the deficit increase by 260 per cent.

While the Government has argued that much of this extra funding has been needed to finance cost increases in programs related to the recession—for example, increased UIC and welfare payments—the problem is much deeper than that. It is the culmination of 15 years in which the size of the Government has increased at a rate much faster than the ability of Parliament effectively to manage it. What has resulted is a system that is cumbersome, expensive, inefficient and virtually unmanageable.

In a recent column by W. A. Wilson in the Saturday, February 26 *Ottawa Citizen*, he said and I quote:

● (1220)

The Government now makes a determined and dishonest effort to attribute its huge deficit to the decline in revenues brought by the recession, ignoring the fact that it was chronically in deficit for years before the economy turned down. The deficit will not disappear when times improve. Economic recovery will bring tax increases to pay for the excesses that are still going on.

When Government becomes so large after a decade of sprawling, cancerous growth, the fact that recession has no power to force the elimination of fat becomes serious. It matters now in a way that it did not matter when the '60s ended.

This leaves a troubling question: If severe recessions do not force Governments to pare away the wasteful fat, what will do it?

That is a key statement, Mr. Speaker, and I will repeat it:

If severe recessions do not force Governments to pare away the wasteful fat, what will do it?

Every year the Auditor General in his Annual Report to Parliament brings forth new evidence of financial mismanagement and waste. Every year the Government bobs and weaves and soldiers through the criticism and makes vague promises about trying harder next time. And every year we see little action to encourage financial responsibility. This past year the Auditor General spoke of the lack of accountability of the 480-odd corporations in which the Government has an interest. He told us of how PetroCan purchased oil companies at will, without requiring the approval of even the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, much less the Parliament of Canada. Rather than examine these purchases to see how they may or may not improve the lot of Canadians, the Government has treated each and every trip to the consumers' pockets as a triumph.

Spending of Crown Corporations amounted to over \$25 billion annually at the end of 1979, and it has been growing steadily ever since, largely as a result of a sort of blank-cheque mentality, the same mindset, the same malignancy, that is destroying our entire federal system. The greatest single obstacle to an economic recovery for Canadians is the wastefulness of the federal Government and the intolerable burden which this has placed on our economic system. If we simply took less out of our economy to pay for mismanagement, then

### *Borrowing Authority*

we would not need "injections" by Government to stimulate—or more accurately, "simulate"—demand.

I am not asking the Government to save money by cutting Unemployment Insurance payments or by taking welfare payments away from the needy. I am not saying that we should decrease payments to pensioners. However, we should, and can, manage our existing programs in a more efficient and effective manner without causing suffering by the disadvantaged.

As an example of a program which is mismanaged, I would like to cite the Summer Canada Student Employment Program. Every year the Department of Employment and Immigration allocates many millions of dollars to provide jobs for students. Every summer, the Government also habitually delivers cheques late to some program managers, instructing these individuals to go to a bank and make personal loans to pay program workers who are waiting for their cheques. This has happened every year since I have been associated with the Program in my constituency as a Member of Parliament.

Who is supposed to bear the interest costs on these loans? I wrote to the Minister about this problem last year and in his response he indicated that if the Program sponsor, or manager, would contact one of his officials in Vancouver, they would then be compensated for interest paid on these loans. If the Government proposes to solve our unemployment problems with these make-work programs, you would think it would be well enough organized to at least pay the workers on time. After the Program has become established, as this one has, one would at least expect that Government would have figured out a way of performing this simple task.

It is not simply the interest charges which must cost the Government in this situation. The Minister, of course, must assign someone to administer the payment of these interest charges. There is also considerable cost and frustration caused to the sponsor, and many people in my riding have indicated to me that they will not apply for the Program again because it simply is not worth it. There are just too many problems.

The Department has also become less efficient in another area of the "Summer Canada" Program. In 1981 I knew how much money my constituency would be allocated by January 19, and the deadline for applications was March 16. This gave project sponsors almost two full months to develop worthwhile projects and to submit proposals. This year I found out how much my constituency would be allowed on February 25, just a week ago, and the deadline for submissions is today, March 4. Many of my constituents are only now finding out that there will be a Summer Canada Program. This smacks of gross lack of planning by the Government, if not downright mismanagement. Today, Mr. Speaker, this matter came up in Question Period, and I would urge the Minister to see if he could give us another two weeks before the cut-off deadline on this Program. One would think that the process would become more efficient as the kinks were ironed out and as established procedures were set up. What has in fact happened is the opposite.