

Routine Proceedings

this reduction, \$4.4 million, results from the review of government programs, whereas program review is one of the cornerstones of government operations. Is this not somewhat paradoxical?

The budget of the Auditor General is cut when the role of this department is expanding, and the government is telling us that the Auditor General will publish as many as five reports a year. The existing legislation will have to be amended, in any case. It provides that the Auditor General may publish one annual report and three supplementary reports. Let us give the Auditor General the funds he needs to do his job, instead of cutting his budget as his role expands.

• (1025)

[English]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I noted in the statement by the President of the Treasury Board that he says: "What I have just said shows that we didn't shy away from tough decisions" and "this government is committed to fiscal responsibility".

The government thinks it is just a case of more taxes, more taxes, more taxes. Then it says: "We're going to do some cutting all across the board". However, on looking at the estimates we find the spending of the government is going up again for the second year in a row. Of course the previous government did it every year before that.

Every year spending goes up. The government says it is cutting. It is cutting the programs it delivers to the people of Canada because the amount of interest paid on the national debt is getting out of control. That is why when we add the two together, spending goes up.

Let us get the job done. Let us get the budget balanced and let us stop the growth of interest during the first three years of this Liberal government. It is going to cut services to Canadians from \$120 billion down to \$108 billion. However the interest on the debt will go from \$38 billion to \$51 billion, which more than offsets all the cuts that are going to be made. That situation is going to continue. Spending will go up and services to Canadians will go down.

Mr. Silye: In their last year they will spend more money than in their first year: 158.7 to 158.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, we also find out about the great commitment for looking after social programs. The government is going to cut social spending by 7.3 per cent. If we look at the cultural programs, it is going to cut them by 6.9 per cent.

Let us get the priorities straight here. Surely we should be protecting the core of social programs and the cultural programs should be set aside until we get the deficit under control. Surely

these are the types of things that a prudent manager would be focusing on in a government that is trying to do the difficult job of balancing the budget.

I noticed the Auditor General's budget is going to get cut by 10 per cent. He manages his department responsibly. He says he can do with 10 per cent less. He is the one that points out all the waste and mismanagement right across government. Surely if he can cut by 10 per cent, every other department could get cut by 10 per cent.

That is what the Reform Party has been saying all along. There are cuts; there is waste; there is mismanagement that can be done away with in departments without cutting social programs.

We find there are some increases however. It is not just cut, cut, cut all the way. Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation in eastern Canada gets an increase of 69 per cent, from \$10 million to \$17 million. It seems a little difficult to explain why one particular area, one particular minister in one particular department can receive an increase of 69 per cent when everybody else has to do with a little less.

The minister tells us he is going to transfer the freshwater management of fish to the provinces. We thought: "This is going to be great. Now we are going to see some downsizing in the department". However, in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, spending goes up from \$775 million to \$896 million, an increase of \$121 million in spending as it divests itself of its responsibilities.

Mr. Hermanson: There are no fish.

Mr. Williams: And there are no fish. However we do have 123 executives in that department. As we transfer and divest the responsibilities, the proposal does not call for any decrease in the number of executives. We have to get this straight. We start cutting at the top before we get down to the bottom.

We have talked about the other place that spends a lot of money. I see the estimates are going to give them even more money this coming year. It is a small increase but nonetheless it intends to spend more money in that other place. We have said to start at the top. Start with MPs' pensions. Start with the House of Commons, the Senate and so on.

• (1030)

There are a lot of unemployed people in this country. We need to help people create jobs and we find that \$427 million is going to be spent on our Canadian identity. We would much rather spend this kind of money creating private sector jobs and reducing taxes than spending it to protect our Canadian identity that in many cases has withered away through the multicultural programs that we spend hundreds of millions of dollars on.