

Waste and Mismanagement

increased 20 per cent and that the staff has increased by 50 per cent. The Post Office Department is running a \$350 millions deficit. In spite of all that, it still cannot deliver mail on time and frequently does not deliver at all.

We could spend a day talking about the \$3 million ill-considered and poorly planned Loto Canada spillage which the minister responsible tried to claim was an example of good management. The money wasted by this government on airports like Mirabel, Pickering and, yes, even Calgary, is worthy of a day's debate.

The money wasted and squandered by Crown corporations like Atomic Energy of Canada Limited in its Argentina deal deserves at least a day of debate, and we certainly could have a day of debate on the money wasted by the Department of Public Works on excessively high cost office space in Ottawa and Hull. There is not time to deal with them all. There is not time left in this parliament to do justice to debate on examples of waste and incompetence on the part of this government, but my colleagues who will be speaking later in the day will try to deal with some of these and others.

Anyone can understand mistakes, but ten years of continuing waste and mismanagement of incredibly damning audits by the Auditor General and no evidence of concrete action taken to rectify this—to use the words of the Auditor General—“particular serious situation” are things the public do not understand and will not forgive.

Closely related to these gross failures in management is the disparaging and cynical view of parliament that this government and particularly the Prime Minister take. As the Lambert commission points out in its interim report, and as the Auditor General has pointed out on several occasions, parliament has lost control of the public purse and, indeed, the government probably has as well.

No Prime Minister in history has had less respect or less regard for this institution, parliament, than has this Prime Minister. Hon. members will recall that famous quote to the effect that we members of parliament are nobodies when we get 50 yards from the Hill. That statement might have been made in a fit of pique, but the evidence shows that that indeed is the view of the Prime Minister. He genuinely believes that the House of Commons has no right to interfere with government, that we do not have competence, that we are nobodies and therefore, by implication, that those who elected us are not very smart either.

The fact that this is the view of the Prime Minister is reflected in the manner in which closure is used by the government with such increasing frequency. Just last week there was evidence of the government's writing closure into legislation. Such is the enthusiasm of this government for closure that we had the ridiculous spectacle last week of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) moving closure on a debate which had ended.

Without complete parliamentary oversight and parliamentary authority over spending by government, we do not have a parliamentary democracy, not in any real sense. The rule

[Mr. Andre.]

changes introduced by the Prime Minister soon after his taking office removed the last vestiges of authority parliament might have had over the spending habits of this or any government. But the Prime Minister has not been satisfied with just eliminating parliament's authority with regard to spending. He was not satisfied just to change the rules so that parliament could no longer alter even a nickel's worth of the government's spending plans. He has gone to extraordinary lengths to prevent parliament from even knowing about or being aware of government spending.

In this respect I refer to the way in which spending estimates are cooked and manipulated to disguise their true magnitude. I have dealt with this subject in this House before. I have dealt with the manner in which this government disguises its true spending. I have pointed out the flimflam and basically dishonest bookkeeping which successive presidents of the Treasury Board have utilized in an attempt to lull the Canadian public into believing that the government really does have a handle on spending and that it really is reducing the amount being spent.

I have pointed out how, through the use of Crown corporations, vast sums of money—billions which belong to the taxpayers of Canada and which we in the House of Commons should be examining and authorizing the expenditure of—are being spent, amounts which not only do not receive parliamentary authority but which also are not even presented to parliament for its information. Starting in 1968 the government changed the rules regarding the presentation of estimates so that loans repaid were no longer listed on the revenue side but showed up as negative expenditures. If the government used the old and proper accounting procedure, spending estimates this year would be \$244 million higher than the estimates presented. This year, the government is presenting spending estimates of an incredible \$52.6 billion. Even more incredible and frightening to anybody who cares about the economic welfare of the country is that our \$12 billion deficit is some \$2 billion more than the entire spending of the government when this administration took office.

However, that is not the whole story. That \$52.6 billion does not include \$1.5 billion being spent by Petro-Canada. It does not include several hundred million dollars being spent by the Export Development Corporation. It does not include the several hundred million dollars being spent by CMHC. It does not include moneys being used to subsidize Syncrude production. That is some type of revolving fund. It does not include moneys being spent on airports because the airport revolving fund has been taken out of the spending estimates. Mr. Speaker, the actual spending is several billions of dollars higher than this government has declared to the public. This disguising, this hiding of public sector spending from the elected representatives of the Canadian people—that is, from us in the House of Commons—is a classic example which demonstrates the utter contempt that the Prime Minister has for parliament and our parliamentary, democratic system.