

Instead of building office blocks that would belong to the government in 20 years, they prefer paying rent for 150 years. Building themselves would not help out their friends. Indeed, the Auditor General mentions this in his report.

To get back to computers, this is a matter that I studied at the unemployment insurance. I was told that these computers were second hand, that they were rented to "try them out", and that the government was paying an exorbitant rent for the use of them. The replies I got from the department were quite true: these second hand computers had been rented, but the government was paying for repairs as well as rent. The owner might at least have undertaken to keep the machines in working order! The government pays exorbitant rent instead of simply buying new computers. But that would not have benefited the in-group. There are a number of such cases involving computers, and I can even quote names. The rented computers did not work properly, and caused a multitude of problems when it came to paying out unemployment insurance allowances. And yet the machines are still being rented.

In another department, computers were bought on the instalment plan. To quote again from the Auditor General's report:

81. Computer purchased on the instalment plan.

Instead of paying for the computer in full, they paid \$190,000 in interest on one computer alone. I believe that the government pays this amount of interest now because the large companies are very generous at election time, you have to admit.

To continue my quotation:

Escalation of costs relative to developing and implementing a computer-based management information system.

Grant paid without parliamentary approval

Grants paid without approval remind me of the grants awarded in election campaigns, grants which were distributed to everyone. I repeat:

—without parliamentary approval

Then, there is question of a payment of interest to the Army Benevolent Fund. I quote:

Interest on the public debt improperly charged to departmental programs.

Reimbursement to Bank of Canada for bonds improperly redeemed.

Inadequate accounting for appropriation and Indian band funds.

And there is ever so much. Then comes this one:

Local Initiatives Program

What does the Auditor General say about the Local Initiatives Program? The following:

115. Local Initiatives Program. Manpower and Immigration Vote 10 provided \$125 million for payments to municipal and other public bodies and community organizations and private groups with respect to projects undertaken by them for the purposes of providing employment to unemployed workers and contributing to the betterment of the community. This Program, known as the Local Initiatives Program, was announced in the House of Commons on October 27, 1971.

At March 31, 1972, 5,672 projects had been approved, on which \$83,716,000 was disbursed during the year.

Control of Public Funds

The principal objective of the Program was the creation of additional jobs between November 1971 and May 1972—persons hired by project sponsors were to be drawn first from the unemployed...

Notice these words:

... drawn first from the unemployed through Canada Manpower Centres. The objective was to be achieved through innovative and imaginative projects to provide new facilities and services for the benefit of the community as a whole. Participation of municipalities, community groups and unemployed individuals in the development and management of the projects was invited.

Guidelines for the Program included the following:

—projects were to be capable of being put into effect quickly so that the main employment impact occurred within six months after November 1, 1971;

The amount of financial support was related directly to labour and other costs of the project. For labour the contribution was based on the level of prevailing wages and the skills required in each project but was not to exceed an average of \$100 per man-week.

And what happened? Fifty per cent of those who worked on these projects were not unemployed. They were all friends of the party, but not unemployed, and that is what the Auditor General denounces in his report.

I see that my time has expired, Mr. Speaker.

● (1450)

[*English*]

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the motion that we are discussing is one that is aimed at the insidious, rather lustful and deliberate attempt by the government, the executive, to increase its powers of control. This motion is based also on the Auditor General's report, and the rapidly accelerating encroachments that are being made by the present government to weaken parliamentary control over the expenditure of national revenue. From listening to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) this morning, it was very apparent to me that a little time in opposition would do him a good deal of good. As a matter of fact, it does all governments a good deal of good to come over to this side of the House from time to time and experience the feelings and frustrations of the members of the opposition.

I want to discuss this question today in the short time available to me from three points of view. The first has to do with the depths to which the institution of parliament itself has fallen as a result of the policies that have been followed by the government; second, I want to discuss the motion as it relates to the committee system; and lastly, if I still have time, I want to deal selectively with one or two specific examples. I maintain that not only since 1968 but from 1963, when the government changed, a deliberate course has been followed to weaken the institution of parliament. What we have now is not the ultimate result of that kind of undesirable policy but certainly very close to the ultimate result.

I maintain that this place has become a very flabby and ineffective debating forum. All we have to do is to look around at the benches of the House this Friday afternoon to determine the degree of interest in this debate. We were confronted with changes in the rules under the guise of parliamentary reform, under the guise of making more opportunities available to Members of Parliament to perform their functions more effectively, under the guise, as