

forces which occur within the country. Maxwell Henderson recognized this.

The next Auditor General, of course, was J. J. Macdonell. He noted that the Treasury Board had acted on 55 of the 117 abuses singled out in the 1972-1973 report, and that another 33 per cent were under review. He said that the reason his annual report was so short was that so many of the faults he found in various departments get fixed, and therefore lose their materiality. Macdonell said that he was impressed by the people he met in government "lots of sincere, hardworking public servants", were the words he used.

Macdonell said that the average reaction when he finds fault with something is, "Good heavens, we must do something about that", and most times they do. It appears this attitude of co-operation and the low profile approach of Mr. Macdonell will be of great help to us in the future. Mr. Macdonell has quickly revealed himself as a superb professional who is bringing new prestige and authority to his office. He said that the public accounts committee should be delighted with this new report, that at last MPs have a chance to do something constructive. The committee will have before it a report which even notes how departments have mended their ways. That, after all, is what the exercise should be all about.

I would like to read a little note from the press concerning supplementary estimates.

The federal opposition parties were caught napping. None of them showed up at the House of Commons committee meeting which was scheduled to hear Mr. Buchanan defend his department's spending estimates. That is hardly the close scrutiny of governmental spending the people of Canada expect from opposition members.

The opposition talks of mismanagement by the government. What kind of management has the opposition shown in the use of the public accounts committee when they do not even turn up to ask questions of the minister when he was prepared to answer them?

We do not get comments like these from everyone. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has a vital interest in this country, and I believe that they are very important. Their comments are very important to the business community and are certainly good guidance to and good criticism of the government. This is what they said about the budget:

The chamber labelled the budget as responsible, and commended Finance Minister Jean Chrétien for resisting the temptation to bring in a financially dangerous program of massive tax cuts. While expressing alarm at the government's cash requirements of \$10.8 billion, the chamber said the fact that these requirements are being reduced by \$1.3 billion from 1978-79 levels is particularly welcome.

Why can the opposition not give criticism of that nature instead of attacking the money spent by the task force in trying to find out what the Canadian public think of our dream, our rebirth and renewal of our constitution? However, the chamber does not stop there. Later on it says:

The Canadian Chamber has agreed to support the Comptroller General in his initiative to establish financial control mechanisms in various federal departments. The chamber has offered to assist in the implementation of the scheme, and will help to secure the appropriate people for the assignment.

Waste and Mismanagement

With an important step like that having been taken, we are talking like we are in the dark ages, as though everybody has sat by for ten years and done nothing. It just does not happen to be true, and the facts which I have read to you bear this out. Here are a couple more facts. Total federal government expenditures, as a percentage of the gross national product, have dropped since 1975. This is something which is rarely ever said publicly. It is almost as though it is a shame to admit that anything in line with a controlled industry has existed. In the fiscal year 1975-1976 government expenditures totalled 22.5 per cent of the GNP; in 1976-1977, 21.5 per cent; in 1977-1978, 21.0 per cent; 1978-1979 forecast 20.7 per cent, and the 1979-1980 forecast, 20.3 per cent. How is it that the opposition can presume that nothing has happened? This most certainly gives an indication of efficiency and effectiveness as the motion requests.

The federal government has reduced its expenditures by \$500 million for 1978-1979 and by \$2 billion for 1979-1980. What about the growth of the public service itself, which has reduced from 5.6 per cent in 1974-1975 to .6 per cent in the 1977-1978 estimates? All these facts seem to be ignored.

What do we talk about? One of the hon. members opposite, a member for whom I have the greatest respect, discusses the terrible plight of a person who is petitioning outside the buildings of parliament. It is not untraditional or unusual that an opposition member or I might not be able to do anything in a situation where the due process of law has been applied in the courts of our land. This person must either accept the judgment or search for higher authority to repeal it. It is ridiculous to expect a parliamentarian, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), or a member of cabinet to supersede a decision by the courts of this land. It must be remembered that justice stands holding the balance. I notice though that sometimes one eye is covered, but all of us must accept what comes from justice, all of us must accept that cruel lady, and the lady may have to accept that cruel lady as well. That does not mean to say we will not do what we can to defend an individual in trouble, but we must obey the laws of the land. I submit, whether hon. members consider it inappropriate for members of parliament, because it is parliament that is involved, not just the government, that it is certainly not an example of waste, inefficiency or mismanagement.

We seem to forget that in the first few paragraphs of the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister said that from projected spending for this fiscal year the government would be subtracting \$500 million, and from the expenditures expected for the next fiscal year it would be taking away \$2 billion. If hon. members opposite quarrel with those figures, or attempted to prove them incorrect, I could understand, but instead we end up with arguments concerning some incident which might occur on the Hill or in the other place, and using it as an excuse to condemn the government for almost everything that has occurred.

However, the end of the motion says something else, and I would like to address a few words in that regard. This is with respect to the concern about government spending according to