

Restraint of Government Expenditures

what is happening. It is destroying the incentive to work and to produce. When the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) came into this House he went across the country asking farmers to produce to beat the band. We all remember that. Now he is telling them to cut back. What better way is there to destroy incentive than to do that? When a minister does that, he destroys the faith of the people in any form of government. When we cannot find honesty in the higher echelons of government, how can we find honesty in other segments of our society? One of the worst things which could happen to Canadians would be to learn how to be dishonest. Once people become dishonest, they lose their worth—and this we cannot afford.

How can we measure the worth of the programs governments are instituting? This is one of the main problems the Auditor General has to face. How do we measure the worth of any individual in a department? How do we measure man-hour worth? This is a very complicated subject which deserves consideration, and this government would do well to work in conjunction with the Auditor General to devise programs which can be set in place whereby there can be a certain measurement of the man-hour worth of civil servants within departments. We, as members of parliament, are a cost to the taxpayer, and when I discuss the worth of anyone, members are included. I have to think about the expenditures which are paid by the taxpayers. Certain publications come to our desks and sometimes I think that the government is penny wise and pound foolish. How do we deal with items which the government considers petty, when \$1 million means so little to it? In many ways there could be a considerable amount saved.

The press carried a story to the effect that a grand move had been made by the government to save paper by using both sides of every page. I suggest that the number of pages should be considered first; then using both sides might have some impact. I doubt if any member of parliament could estimate the number of tons of paper delivered to his office by hand or by mail in any given week. I want to mention a few unnecessary documents or papers which could be eliminated or decreased. Perhaps this will make government members realize that we on this side are making observations and suggestions to the government which it can use in order to cut down expenditures. We do not need copies of speeches or statements delivered in the House of Commons. That is a waste of time and a complete abuse of paper. *Hansard* gives us this information.

I have here a speech in very colourful form. It was a speech by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Abbott)—who is a good fellow—at second reading of the borrowers' and depositors' protection bill given on November 1, 1976. All that is in *Hansard*, so why do we have to have it delivered to our offices? The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) addressed a national conference with regard to mental retardation. We received that address in both English and French. There are few hon. members in this House who read both versions. Surely they read only one or the other. Hon. members should request which version they

[Mr. Towers.]

want. I agree that they should have either one, but I think it should be the responsibility of hon. members to request whether they want English or French speeches delivered to their offices. That would prevent much paper from going into waste-paper baskets.

I suggest that speeches delivered by members of the cabinet, their parliamentary secretaries or representatives should be supplied only to hon. members who request them. Even if hon. members had time to use documents and speeches in either English or French, no one should receive copies in both languages unless there is a specific request. A circular to each office with simple questions would take care of that duplication.

Large numbers of envelopes come to our offices, and they are sized 8½ by 11, 15 by 9½ and even bigger on occasion. They are used to deliver just one sheet which, if folded, would fit into a No. 9 or No. 10 envelope. That happens on a continuing basis. The Public Service Commission is one of the chief offenders. Time and again competition posters of one or two pages are sent out in 15 by 9½ envelopes. Thousands of them go out across Canada daily. The waste is incalculable. I have one here. There seems to be no will on the part of government departments to cut back this extra cost.

Then, of course, there is other dressing-up which is wasteful. I refer to the use of heavy and unusually glossy folders which enclose pamphlets, speeches and other information from departmental branches or government offices, usually of ministers. These are useless and unnecessary and I wonder why they are ordered at all. I and other hon. member have examples of these. I have one here. It is from the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Another is from Information Canada. So it goes, Mr. Speaker. While I realize and understand the importance of publishing reports, background papers, books and other documents in two languages, surely every person, whether in parliament or not, would be satisfied with one copy in one language. More often than not, one copy is thrown out if for no other reason than to save space in the office. I am sure I am speaking about something of which all members are aware. As members of parliament, we have to take issue with this because if we are to cut back we have to do it in these areas where it will not affect the development of our country.

● (1120)

I am very sure that these are the areas governments will have to look at in order to get away from the terrible deficit which faces us at the present time, and possibly again next year. Canadians are getting sick and tired of being taken for a ride—whether it is by “Langair,” “Lang rent-a-car”, “Lang’s fliers”, or what have you. They are just sick and tired of the way their tax dollars are spent.

After those preliminary remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to get down to why I oppose this bill. One year ago the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board was adamant about bringing the grain stabilization bill before this House. Now he wants to renege on the government's payments into that stabilization fund. He is demanding that producers pay their