I also want to mention the propaganda war going on between Quebec and the federal government which both want to promote their view of federalism. We spend large sums of money in advertising not to promote federalism as is but rather to promote Trudeau style federalism, a centralized and dictatorial form of federalism where the provinces are only the pawns of the central government. There again, we do not know how much that will cost us. This debate strikes me as sterile. Instead, the government should apply itself to making concrete proposals to the provinces, at least to prove to Quebec its willingness to come to terms. While the Pepin-Robarts report has gone to gather dust on shelves somewhere, both DREE and the Department of Supply and Services are going ahead with their little publicity campaign in Quebec, simply because the provincial government made a campaign of its own to get people involved in its OSE program. It seems to me those federal funds could be better invested. I know many unemployed workers in my riding who would be very happy to know the Canada Works program has more funds at its disposal.

Another example of inconsistency comes to my mind, that of the child tax credit. Anyone who has the right to claim that tax credit will have to fill out a separate tax return; this means that in a family where there is but one wage earner, that is the father, the mother will have to fill in her own tax return. And talk about the problems of separated couples and the income of dependent children! Revenue Canada will have to check over two million additional tax returns, that is the tax returns themselves, checking the return of the wife against that of her husband, and all the appended slips and required vouchers. Now that is another costly administrative chaos. In addition, a large number of those returns will surely not have been filled in properly. Can you imagine all that paper work, all that red tape in order to reduce family allowances!

Mr. Speaker, when ordinary folk have to tighten their belts because inflation is eroding their pay cheques and unemployment constantly threatens a large number of workers in this country, we must react quickly and use public funds to solve urgent problems and so improve the lot of our people and foster human dignity in this country.

[*English*]

Hon. Judd Buchanan (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion because I am concerned that members opposite are continuing to ignore the genuine progress that is being made in the area of management efficiency by this government. I am concerned because, in the rush for public attention, facts are being overlooked and much evidence is lost in the mud of political rhetoric.

I want to take the next few minutes to review for hon. members some of the initiatives that have been undertaken and to discuss some of the actions now under way. I will discuss the continuing program of restraint in spending and in the administration of the government operations, as well as draw attention to the IMPAC studies under way by the Comptroller General. I will comment also on the government's restraint program.

• (1620)

As far as administrative measures are concerned, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the members of this House that a program of administrative restraint was introduced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) when he was president of the Treasury Board on March 25, 1976. This program has been carried through vigorously both by my predecessor, the present President of the Board of Economic Development Ministers (Mr. Andras), and myself, and I am pleased to report to you the following achievements of administrative restraint during the first nine months of fiscal year 1978-79.

In keeping with the new Treasury Board guidelines on office accommodation, the government in consolidating and reducing its over-all use of office space. More than 82 accommodation requests were received by the Treasury Board during the last year and the space requested was reduced by more than 20 per cent. As a result, government reduced its actual inventory of office space by about one million square feet with a concomitant saving of about $7 million in annual rent.

In keeping with government policy to conserve energy, Treasury Board has issued new guidelines for the acquisition of motor vehicles. As a result, the purchasing trend of a few years ago, which was made up mainly of full-sized sedans and station wagons, has been completely reversed. Compacts now account for 55 per cent of new purchases, while full-sized car purchases dropped to 3 per cent in 1978. Apart from the obvious savings in energy consumption, the reduced purchasing price that can be attributed to this changing mix in the government vehicle fleet is of the order of $1 million per year.

With respect to broader energy savings, Treasury Board, in co-operation with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, has instructed departments to observe the necessary caution of energy consumption. As a result, the government energy bill last year was reduced by $31 million. Reflecting these measures of prudent housekeeping, Ontario Hydro reported that the city of Ottawa was the only major city in Ontario to use less electricity in 1977 than the year before. A good part of the credit goes to the federal government, according to Ontario Hydro, for cutting down its consumption.

In a further attempt to conserve energy while supporting public transportation, government no longer provides all of its employees in city core areas with free parking. In 1978-79 this policy, which is now in effect throughout most Canadian cities, produced revenues of $1.4 million.

In the broad area of office equipment, government savings last year were some $3 million as a result of better tendering procedures, limiting choices and further restraint in acquisitions. Similarly, with respect to office furniture, expenditures have been reduced sharply over the past years and are now stabilized at around $5 million per year, compared to $7 million per year before the restraint program took effect. Meanwhile new policies have been put in place to maintain the newly established ceiling of $5 million.