

—if a deliberate effort were made to establish an environment that encourages managers to achieve satisfactory results at reasonable cost, significant improvements could be made in achieving value for money. I am therefore very pleased to see policy in line with that view of things.

Does my colleague feel that this very positive endorsement by the federal financial watchdog, the Auditor General, is a good endorsement of the Government's fiscal management?

Mr. Blenkarn: Madam Speaker, I think we have made some real progress in managing more carefully the public purse. We have a long way to go yet. I run into, as I am sure my colleague does, all sorts of instances where I think we might have done something more reasonably, perhaps at less cost. Perhaps there are things we are doing now that we might not need to do at one point. But I am really pleased, as I mentioned in my remarks, about the system whereby we are motivating our senior people in the Public Service to watch very closely how they spend money. We are now rewarding them on the basis of their competence of staying within the budget lines. I think members ought to be pleased. In times past we used to see Supplementary Estimates (A), (B), (C) and (D) and I remember a Supplementary Estimates (E). But last year we only got to Supplementary Estimates (B), and last year they stayed pretty close to the requirements. Let me say to Members of this House that the management of money has been far more effective than ever before.

Mr. de Jong: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn), a member that we in the Finance Committee hold in high esteem. Very often more wisdom comes forth from him in the Finance Committee than when he gives speeches in the House. We understand that when he gives speeches in the House he is on television and has to do his political posturing. If citizens would care to wade through the reports of the Finance Committee, they would find some worthwhile suggestions from the member on how we can cut some tax loopholes that corporations and the well-to-do, particularly, enjoy which would help reduce the deficit.

It is unfortunate in the member's remarks today that he did not go on at some length about some of the areas that should be cut off. One major reason that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) was unable to fulfil his deficit predictions was that his estimates of corporate taxes were down by some \$2 billion last year. The Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs also knows that there is well over \$30 billion in unused business credits, losses, deductions still out there in the books. Some estimates go as high as \$35 billion to \$38 billion in business exemptions that still have not been used. This is a major concern to all of us. I am certain it is a concern to the Hon. Member, as it surely must be a concern to the Minister of Finance himself.

What suggestion does my colleague feel the Government should take to make certain that those profitable corporations pay their fair share and help carry the burden of reducing the deficit?

Public Employees Political Rights Act

Mr. Blenkarn: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. The finance committee, of which he is a part, has been involved in the question of tax reform and has heard witnesses on tax reform matters since before Christmas. We are bit by bit going after various industry groups that are paying little tax, if any at all. We have come up with a number of suggestions that we have given to the Department that I suspect will form part of the tax reform package. Having said that, I do not think that the tax reform package will really solve our deficit problem directly in raising new revenue to pay it down. It will not. But it will make it possible for us to reduce tax rates to the point where our businesses will be more competitive with those in the rest of the world and where it will be possible for individual tax rates for individual Canadians to be less than they are, as promised by the Minister of Finance.

I think in the long run, of course, that tax reform is essential to the growth of the country because it will enable the tax wedge to be more evenly dispersed in a fashion that will encourage rather than discourage economic activity, and the new economic activity that tax reform will bring hopefully will improve the fiscal imbalance about which I spoke earlier.

Mr. de Jong: Madam Speaker, is it possible to start my remarks now on the debate?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): There is only one minute left before five o'clock. If the Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong) wants to be recognized, I can do so at this point for some 30 seconds. He does know, I am sure, that he would lose his right to speak should he not be in the House when we resume debate.

It being 5 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

● (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS--PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

PUBLIC EMPLOYEES POLITICAL RIGHTS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre) moved that Bill C-231, an Act to provide for the political rights of public employees, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, this is the third time we have had an opportunity to discuss a resolution or, in this case, a Bill with respect to the issue of political rights which I have had the honour of introducing into the House. I have brought the matter before the House repeatedly because I do believe that all political Parties have a responsibility to carry through on