

standing. I do not see how one can complain of such a situation when one can readily settle the problem by other means.

Such a motion, I feel, should have been introduced in the procedure and organization committee. The very object of this committee is the study of House and committee procedures and I think that instead of taking the time of the House on a motion as vague and, I believe, as useless as this one, it would have been better had it been introduced before the standing committee of the House whose responsibility is precisely to study problems of this kind.

Today, we could have discussed more interesting questions. All together, we could have thoroughly studied the estimates of a single department, for instance. It has been suggested that when the opposition's 25 days are used up it might be advisable to meet in committee of the whole for detailed scrutiny of the estimates of any particular department. However, it can still be considered that the estimates for the same department can be thoroughly examined in an already existing standing committee.

At the time when the Standing Orders of the House were altered, Parliament voted in favour of the changes, and I for one feel the new rules have been quite adequate, since we have been able to release the House from the work of examining estimates, thus allowing us more detailed study of bills.

I am surprised that the Creditistes seem to approve the motion and the amendment because in the three committees to which I belong, the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee which I have the honour of chairing, the Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs Committee and the Public Accounts Committee, I have yet to witness regular attendance of Creditistes to study estimates referred to those three committees.

I understand that they are not many, and they will be fewer still after the next election. However, when they are appointed to a committee, they should at least try to attend the meetings, because on the committees I have mentioned, at least one Creditiste is appointed. They should consider it their duty to be present, particularly in committees dealing with economic affairs, which are of the highest importance. It seems that the social credit theory clashes with the procedure of the House of Commons, and they are not happy to sit in on committees; they prefer practicing demagoguery—inside the House—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time is expired.

[English]

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion I do not intend to indulge in a shell game with the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). Suffice it to say that in the six years I have been here, total government expenditure has more than doubled—from \$7.2 billion to \$15.7 billion. This is borne out by the handy little booklet the hon. gentleman caused to be distributed at the same time as we received the estimates.

I agree that to talk in global figures at this time might not accomplish what we have set out to do here. I submit

Control of Government Expenditures

there has been mismanagement and waste by the government. In support of this contention I intend to deal specifically with one agency of the government, namely, Information Canada, which ironically tabled its first annual report today. Without going into detail concerning this report, which could itself be the subject of further debate, I would say that its form is specious and basically flim-flam. Though colourful in style, it is empty in substance, trying to flesh-out a skeleton and instil life where there is no purpose.

When the political archeologists sift through the sands of the just society, if they find any trace of Information Canada at all they will have found in capsule form the dreams and despairs of that society. Embalmed with the dried-out petals of flower power, the remains will be mute testimony to the frustrated hopes and disappointed expectations of thousands of Canadians who happened to live during the Trudeau era. They yearned for a new era in politics: they got parliamentary profanity. They wanted compassion, but they were fed into a computer. They hoped for substance and sensitivity: they received the style of a shrug and a smile. Vacillation, indifference, task forces, surveys, waste and policy vacuums were the tell-tale mark of the day.

Where better to see this story than in the birth and the life of Information Canada? But, really, what should we have expected from an agency which was a pet project of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), conceived in haste with a troubled pregnancy and subjected to an induced and troubled labour. And to compound all these problems we had as midwife Mr. Jean-Louis Gagnon. There was naturally going to be a retarded growth with these ingredients, not a retarded growth in terms of cost or size but certainly a retarded growth expressing a feeble function and one deficient in purpose.

Doubts about the purpose of Information Canada and fears regarding its function as a propaganda tool of government were crystallized by the appointment of Mr. Gagnon, a former propaganda chief of the Liberal party in Quebec, as director-general. This is where the Prime Minister made his first basic mistake in his tenure of office. He failed fully to appreciate the human factor in the appointment and the seeds of suspicion which the appointment sowed—for without reference to past associations or former political friends, the appointment of the chief of the new agency should have been an appointment beyond reach of suspicion, like Caesar's wife. He should not only have been pure, but he should have been above suspicion. Here, there was certainly suspicion, the same type of suspicion as if one appointed Yves Geoffroy as head of the penitentiary service. We would know he was doing a job but we would wonder who he was doing the job on.

If my remarks appear unduly harsh, I invite hon. members opposite to look at the record. The report of the task force was tabled on November 4, 1969. The announcement of the creation of Information Canada was made on February 10, 1970. Much to the surprise of some, this was the only parliamentary framework within which we had to work in so far as Information Canada was concerned since there was no legislative proposal which Parliament