

Clark). If one were to believe the statements the Prime Minister has been making, it is Joe Clark, the Leader of the Opposition, who is responsible for the disunity in the country, the falling dollar, the fact that eastern Canadians still do not have a secure supply of oil, and indeed just about every other problem facing the nation. Only a bankrupt government and a bankrupt Prime Minister would stoop to that level.

These most recent attacks on the Leader of the Opposition may be very entertaining to Liberal partisans, but they are fooling nobody. We know and the Canadian public know that the blame for this mismanagement, these monumental failures, rests right on the shoulders of this Liberal government and in particular this Prime Minister. The fact is that the present Prime Minister is the least able manager of any Prime Minister in Canada's history. It is widely accepted that this cabinet is the weakest in Canada's history. As a cabinet maker, the Prime Minister is a bust. Part of the reason is that he is a very poor judge of people. As Douglas Fisher stated in a column in the *Toronto Sun* on March 21, 1978:

Who was Mr. Trudeau's first senator? Bobbie Giguere! Who picked Jean Dubé, Stanley Haidasz, Warren Allmand, Bob Stanbury, Tony Abbott, Jean-Jacques Blais, Jean-Pierre Goyer, Pierre Juneau and Jack Horner for the cabinet? Who chose Yves Pratte to head Air Canada and later placed Bryce Mackasey in the chairman's position at the airline?

The column goes on to list other such disastrous appointments and then Mr. Fisher points out:

Surely any leader who can be so robustly against wage and price controls, even as a freeze device and then take them up 15 months later without a quibble of candour, has demonstrated how various is his judgment.

But, even if these individuals are better than most people give them credit for being, they really have not had a chance to show it. The Prime Minister, because of the manner in which he has managed his cabinet, has almost destroyed cabinet government as it has been known to most Canadians. I wonder how many people realize that since the right hon. gentleman took office there have been 191 cabinet changes; that is, the 34 cabinet positions have in total been occupied by 191 different people. This means that on an average each cabinet minister has served in five portfolios and remained less than two years in any one particular cabinet post. Anybody in his right mind knows there cannot be anything else but mismanagement and maladministration when the chief executive officer of an organization changes with that kind of frequency.

At the deputy minister level, changes have been almost as frequent. Vitaly important portfolios, like industry, trade and commerce, energy, mines and resources and even finance have seen their deputy ministers change with far too much frequency. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has had four deputy ministers in the last four years—Jack Armstrong, Gordon MacNabb, Marshall Cohen and now Ian Stewart. Is it any wonder that the government has no coherent energy policy? If a private sector organization went through such managerial changes it would be in deep, deep trouble, and if not bankrupt, on the verge of bankruptcy. Mr. Speaker, if we want to know why this government has failed so miserably to achieve the goals it has set for itself, we need look no

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further than how this Prime Minister has built his cabinets and how he has managed them.

• (1520)

That mismanagement is undoubtedly the root cause of the grossly inadequate financial management and control this government has exercised over taxpayers' money. Hon. members will recall the observation of the Auditor General in his 1975 annual report, and I quote:

The present state of financial management and control systems of departments and agencies of the Government of Canada is significantly below acceptable standards of quality and effectiveness.

That was said in 1975, and the government did absolutely nothing in response to that highly critical statement regarding its management capabilities. The Auditor General was moved in his 1976 annual report to state, and I quote:

Based on the study of the systems of departments, agencies and Crown corporations audited by the Auditor General, financial management and control of the Government of Canada is grossly inadequate. Furthermore, it is likely to remain so until the government takes strong, appropriate and effective measures to rectify this critically serious situation.

It is hard to conceive of a more damning statement of gross mismanagement. It is hard to conceive of what words an auditor could use to be more damning in his criticism. An audit of that kind delivered to a private sector company would result in the immediate resignation of all senior executives and, very likely, shareholder suits directed against the board of directors.

What was the response of the government? Essentially nothing. The government did accept one recommendation of the Auditor General. A Comptroller General was appointed, but the government refused to give the Comptroller General any legislative authority to perform his function and to get to the root of the problem. As we predicted during the Comptroller General debate, the evidence is mounting that this lack of legislative authority has resulted in several attempts to prevent the Comptroller General from doing his job. There have been several attempts to undermine the huge and important task he is called upon to fulfil. My colleague, the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington), will have more to say about that in this debate, but that basically has been the total action taken by the government.

The failure of the government to achieve its goals resulted in a new ministry last fall, the Board of Economic Development Ministers, but as yet I have not talked to anybody or read anything about just exactly what this group is going to do. Clearly, the members of the board seem more determined and concerned about putting a good face on this government prior to the coming election rather than restoring proper management.

The specific examples of waste and plain spillage of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money as a result of the failure of this government to administer properly its position of trust are really too numerous to list, even if I had the whole day. The Post Office Department alone would require a day of debate, especially when we realize that in the last ten years the number of pieces of mail delivered by the department has