

Waste and Mismanagement

Mr. Peters: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure whether that comment was made in jest. Perhaps we will move the fence back a few feet behind the parliament buildings and annex it. Perhaps that will be the answer.

If the Governor General was not a friend of mine, I would continue this exercise. Seeing as he is, I will cease and desist.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

[Translation]

● (2030)

And being returned.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber, the Deputy Governor General had been pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-42, an act to provide a means to conserve the supplies of energy within Canada during periods of national emergency caused by shortages or market disturbances affecting the national security and welfare and the economic stability of Canada—Chapter 17.

Bill C-49, an act to amend the Bank Act and the Quebec Savings Banks Act.—Chapter 49.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 58—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—
CONDEMNATION OF CONTINUING GOVERNMENT WASTE AND
MISMANAGEMENT

The House resumed consideration of the motion (Mr. Andre):

That this House condemns the government for its continuing waste and mismanagement, and its failure to implement management and administrative procedures that will ensure that the taxpayers' funds are spent efficiently, effectively, and according to the will of parliament.

Mr. Gus MacFarlane (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Mr. Speaker, I was

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner).]

taken by the words mentioned in the motion of the opposition, words such as "waste and mismanagement," and I thought I should at least address myself to some of them.

I find it interesting that there is such stress on waste, and I was rather surprised that one member of the opposition, when referring to the kind of "waste" this government has indulged in, referred to the commission on national unity. I cannot understand how any member of this House could in any way feel it was a waste, no matter what the cost, to send people across this country to deal with a question involving national unity.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacFarlane: I cannot understand for an instant why such hon. gentlemen as Mr. Robarts and Mr. Jean-Luc Pepin ever have any remarks of that nature related to them when they, as honest, true, and great Canadian citizens took on the task for this parliament.

● (2040)

I have no quarrel with the hon. gentleman who said that we members of parliament have a great deal of ability at our disposal and that we do indeed represent our constituencies. I agree with him completely. But quite often we have business here and we need the advice of experts. Experts are not always those who have honorary degrees, earned degrees, or professions. So it was necessary to take two gentlemen and a lady, all of whom we know well, and send them across the country, with others, to hear what ordinary souls had to say about unity. To use this as one of the examples of "waste" and extravagance on the part of the government is absolutely ridiculous and unacceptable.

There are other examples. I would like to go back to the days of another Auditor General, Maxwell Henderson. I remember well that during the period when he was talking about government expenditures, he was quite willing to accept that the budget in the Auditor General's office would go from \$2.25 million to \$4.25 million the next year, and to \$6.25 million the following year, while government expenditures did not increase to that extent at all. That, however, was fair from the point of view that he should have the necessary funds to check government expenditures.

This august gentleman commented on something which it might have been more appropriate for the opposition to comment on, rather than them merely making remarks about the wastage on the unity commission. They could have mentioned that there exists inevitably some mismanagement in large corporations and in large governments, as Maxwell Henderson said. This mismanagement often occurs in mid-stream. It is easy in hindsight to talk about all the things which occurred, but the government is dealing with reality and what is occurring now. Some of the innovative changes in policy must be made at the moment. It does not necessarily mean that everything before that time was done wrongly. It means that changes were necessitated as a result of outside forces and