

*Control of Public Funds*

**Mr. Baldwin:** And on page 10 we read:

Expenditures of public moneys at the level of \$20 million a year are today over three times larger than they were a decade ago. The number of employees on the federal payroll, which in 1961-62 was 330,000, reached 405,000 in 1971-72. This figure could well reach 450,000 in 1973-74 on the basis of the recently tabled estimates for that year.

And this does not take into account all the contractual arrangements which are made, by means of which people can be brought in without being shown on the payroll.

The changes which have taken place over this period, and the nature and diversity of public spending, including its presentation to parliament, continue to add vast new dimensions to the problem—In my 1968 report to the House I suggested it would be of material assistance were parliament to consider commissioning a management study of government organization at least once every decade.

I support that. My colleagues support that proposal. I asked a question of the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) yesterday. I think he tried to skip over it. I hope I am wrong. I hope that before this debate is over he will stand up and say he accepts that proposition. And, finally, on the same page:

It is the right, privilege and duty of the House of Commons to control the finances of the country.

Mr. Speaker, this is simply not being done today. Look at some of the ways in which the government evades its responsibilities. Reference to committees I have shown to be useless as far as real control is concerned. Then, there is the method of using dollar items in the estimates. It is quite improper but it is used frequently in spite of admonitions from this House and from the Auditor General.

Take statutory fixed payments. The House passed the relevant bill, of course it did. Hon. members were deceived at the time as to what the ultimate cost would be. Yes, they were deceived. The President of Treasury Board gives me a pained look. If he goes back to those debates and reads what was said, as I did—and I have the relevant copies of *Hansard* here, but I do not have the time to go through them—he will find I am right. The Liberal government from 1963 to 1973 engaged in actual deception through deliberate miscalculation of what the cost of some of these programs would be, and today we are faced, as taxpayers as well as in our capacity as members of the house, with a *fait accompli*.

Take subsidies. Millions of dollars are being disbursed by way of subsidies under programs such as LIP and OFY. We do not have time to debate the issues involved here, but the government knows, and we know, that expenditures of this nature are undertaken, programs are entered into, and only *ex post facto* do we in this House have an opportunity to deal with those expenditures. Hundreds of millions of dollars are committed and all we can do is approve those expenditures, the money having already been spent. That is a fact of life. That is one of the ways in which the government evades its responsibilities.

Then, there is the device of omnibus legislation. I could refer to items in the report—paragraphs 52 to 63. Failure to file annual returns. I could go on. There are 15 or 16 methods itemized by which the government succeeds in evading its responsibilities, preventing the House from carrying out its duties to the taxpayers.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Mr. Speaker, my time has almost expired. I said I would make some suggestions. I shall not simply end my comments on a critical note. I believe it is part of our duty to be critical when we see wrongdoing and my hon. friends and I will exercise our rights without fear or favour. But I believe we should also make some suggestions and I have a few suggestions I should like to put before the House. First, there must be a new Auditor General's Act. The minister says: Wait and see what the new Auditor General has to say about it. That is reasonable. But I submit that the Public Accounts Committee has a responsibility to undertake immediately a study of new legislation and to complete that study before this House adjourns. If not, what will happen is this: the new Auditor General will not take over until July 1. The act will not be studied by the committee until well into the fall of this year. It will not come before this chamber until, probably, the early part of 1974 and there will not be a new act until at least a year has gone by. That is too long to wait, and I, for one, do not intend to see such a length of time elapse if I can prevent it.

The form of the estimates has to be changed. I see the President of the Treasury Board writing busily at this time. He and I know that the estimates conceal rather than reveal, like some of the dresses which were worn a few years ago. I believe the form of the estimates must be studied in committee so as to produce a simplified form which reveals, rather than conceals, information.

Then, as I have said over and over again, there must be brought into the House, into a revived Committee of Supply, at least four or five departments every parliament so that we may have an opportunity in this House to subject to full scrutiny at least one of the important departments once each Parliament. The choice should be that of the opposition. The proceedings in that Committee of Supply should be televised. They should be open to live radio and television. The issue is too important to be concealed from the people of this country, and I suggest this is one debate which should be televised.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baldwin:** My colleagues may agree with me or not, but I think this is important.

A vote should be taken at the end of every opposition day. It is a travesty of parliamentary procedure to conduct debates of this kind in the absence of a division. I recognize that not every vote need be in the nature of a confidence motion, but it is imperative that every opposition motion on an opposition day should be decided by a vote.

Yesterday or the day before I was obliged to drag out of the government, using Standing Order 43, agreement to refer to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts the reports of the Auditor General going back to March 31, 1971. Such a reference should be automatic. What happened was a shocking example of dereliction of duty on the part of the government. There should, therefore, be a change in Standing Orders to provide that automatically at the beginning of each session the Public Accounts for the preceding year and the report of the Auditor General should go to the committee, which would be in business at once. There should be a mandatory date by which the committee should report back. The committee should be