

*Supply*

**Mr. Massé:** Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of humility that I accept the representations made by the opposition member, especially since he referred to me as the President of the Treasury Board when I am in fact the President of the Privy Council. But then again, such mistakes are to be expected from a new member of the House.

I would like to say that a member of the opposition should certainly be a lot more responsible. It is possible for some, including the media, to quote exaggerated figures, but when the Auditor General himself indicates in a press release that the figures used are erroneous and exaggerated, I would hope that opposition members would themselves be responsible enough to use the data correctly.

Also, if the member feels that giving a presentation to more than 400 Canadian studies professors from American universities is not making good use of public money, that I suggest that he take a look at what has been going on in recent years. He will realize that, in fact, this is a very useful initiative for the Canadian government. I also want to point out that a number of staunch separatists were at that conference and tried to influence the audience.

• (1525)

Such personal remarks should not be part of the debate. The important thing is to look at the evolution of governments' roles. The reality is that the federal and provincial governments have less money available to them. It must also be noted that, in recent years, management and information technologies have evolved sufficiently to warrant a readjustment of governments' roles.

In order to solve our current budget and tax problems we will have to redefine federal and provincial responsibilities. Similarly, our economic problems will persist unless the federal government makes the effort of redefining the roles and responsibilities which are incumbent upon it and which it can assume. And we will not succeed either if the provinces do not undertake the same exercise.

The problem is no longer one of jurisdiction. It is more a matter of redefining the responsibilities of the state. By this I mean not only the things which the state can do better than the private sector, but also the fiscal responsibilities which it can delegate.

Consequently, the important thing is not to see if jurisdictions can be improved but to fundamentally review the roles which governments must fulfil with the money they have.

**Mr. Tremblay (Rosemont):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for mistaking the President of the Privy Council for the President of the Treasury Board. I can understand why the Prime Minister did

not give the responsibility of Treasury Board to the hon. member.

**Mr. Duhamel:** You should apologize for making those remarks—

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, as this is my first opportunity to speak in the House I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the Chair. I would also like to thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to represent them. I pledge to them I will do the best I can to take that responsibility seriously for the next term.

The motion the Bloc Quebecois has placed on the Order Paper is an issue which the Reform Party has been talking about for many years. We are very much aware of the heavy cost to Canadian taxpayers caused by duplication and overlap among various federal departments as well as between Ottawa and the provinces. We do however have some concerns with the Bloc's proposed solutions.

The Reform Party's deficit elimination strategy, known as the zero in three plan, outlines a saving of approximately \$500 million to the federal government by eliminating these redundancies, particularly in natural resource sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining and energy. We have calculated these savings by examining government accounts available to the public. We therefore question what is the intent of the Bloc in proposing this special committee to do the same thing.

Is this motion designed to revisit the constitutional relationship between the federal government and the provinces? We are somewhat confused as to where the Bloc is headed with this motion and are concerned that it is heading toward a new round of federal-provincial power bargaining.

I would like to speak for a few moments on this subject. The Reform Party has been on record for many years supporting a clearer division of powers between the federal government and the provinces.

Indeed our blue sheet, which outlines the complete platform we campaigned on last fall, expressly calls for the elimination, duplication and overlap between the two levels of government. Specifically our blue sheet states:

The Reform Party supports a re-examination and re-establishment of a clear division of powers between the constitutional levels of government. Legislative authority should rest with the level most able to effectively govern in each area, with a bias to decentralization in cases of uncertainty.

• (1530)

Furthermore we are convinced that for future constitutional negotiations to be successful we must move away from first ministers' constitutional conferences of the type that produced Meech Lake and Charlottetown and endorse a bottom up process of public consensus building.