

Waste and Mismanagement

● (1710)

I am sure there will be several projects in the department for which I have concern, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, which in years to come will come under criticism in reports of the Auditor General. We are in a devolution period in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. We are asking Indian people across this country to participate more in decision making regarding their own affairs, and this includes financial responsibility. However, with decentralization not only from Ottawa to the various regions across Canada, but decentralization of funds to Indian bands, with those bands making more decisions regarding their financial affairs, there will be the creation of additional conflict between the Auditor General and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I bring this to the attention of the House in the hope that at some future date we will not have so many watchdogs over the Government of Canada, this parliament and the various departments that no one will want to make a decision for fear the decision will be brought forward in the Auditor General's report, or in some other report, showing the financial administration carried out by them in disfavour.

I think it is fair to say that the government shares a healthy concern for adequate accountability which, I hasten to say, has not been brought about because of a malfunction of the system but rather by a desire to improve the existing system. To achieve this very objective let me remind members that the government established a royal commission of inquiry on financial management and accountability in the Government of Canada. The creation of this royal commission was announced by the then president of the Treasury Board on November 22, 1976. If I may quote him, he stated at that time:

—I wish to inform the House of the circumstances which led the government to establish a royal commission of inquiry on financial organization and accountability, and to comment on the terms of reference of that commission as laid down in the order in council which I have just tabled.

Hon. members will note that the mandate of the royal commission has two distinct but, in the government's view, closely interrelated objects: Financial organization, namely, the structure, systems and procedures whereby financial management and control are exercised and should be exercised at all levels and in all departments and agencies of the Government of Canada; accountability, namely, the structure, systems and procedures required to ensure the effective administrative accountability of deputy heads of departments and heads of Crown agencies to the government and, where appropriate, to parliament.

The first object of inquiry reflects the extent to which the government shares the concerns expressed by the Auditor General in his report to this House for the fiscal year 1975-76, as well as during his numerous appearances before the public accounts committee, that the highest attainable standards be met in the administration of public funds. The second object of inquiry reflects the government's determination that the complex of issues, both technical and political, raised in considering certain specific recommendations of the Auditor General be clarified or resolved as swiftly and as effectively as possible.

The president of the Treasury Board at that time—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. parliamentary secretary that his allotted time has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent. Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

[Mr. Anderson.]

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Government House
Ottawa

March 26, 1979

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Yves Pratte, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 26th day of March, at 8.15 p.m., for the purpose of giving royal assent to certain bills.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Edmond Joly de Lotbinière
Administrative Secretary
to the Governor General

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. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, we are back again with another motion with regard to waste and mismanagement. The only suggestion I would make is that this motion should have the word "duplication" added to it as, of course, duplication has been a specialty of this government. We in opposition have taken a responsible position over the years in dealing with waste, mismanagement and duplication, but we have been stonewalled every time by Liberal members and members of the NDP who are no more interested in restraint and cutting back on expenditures than in flying to the moon.