

Supply

of millions of dollars and thousands of people were moved to make way for the airport. As soon as that was done, international flights, which did not have that right back then, were allowed to land directly in Toronto.

So what happened? Well, airport activity was merely transferred from Montreal to Toronto, as it is obviously not in carriers' interest to make two stops. They land directly in Toronto. As a result, Mirabel is now a big white elephant that has cost hundreds of millions of dollars. At the same time, Toronto airport is being expanded because there are too many flights landing there.

We can see in these examples a rational explanation for what is happening in Quebec, whose economic infrastructure is disappearing along with thousands of jobs. It is a debate in which we will be taking an active part in the coming weeks and months, I am sure, when we start speaking seriously in this House about the advantages and disadvantages of Quebec's sovereignty.

What we also learned is not only that the economy is going very badly but in recent years, especially in the election campaign which just ended, but how much people have really lost confidence in politicians now. I think that the results of the October 25 election are eloquent testimony of this. Here we are, then, at the point where the government—at least we think so and we will see in the budget to be tabled very soon—we think that the government will really attack social benefits or fiscal transfers to the provinces in the coming weeks.

Mr. Speaker, that is my point: I think that the people are aware of the very difficult situation we are in now and are also aware that they do not like the way politicians do business. If we want to clean a staircase, we should start at the top. That is how you clean a staircase, from the top down. That is why we not only agree with the motion presented here but we ask for much more. In conclusion, we want a parliamentary committee to examine all government spending item by item, right here in this House, in front of everyone. We want the books to be opened to the public for all tax expenditures.

• (1240)

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Anjou-Rivière-des-Prairies. He explained the problem very well and provided concrete examples of jobs which were eliminated in Quebec and transferred to other regions, following administrative decisions made without consultation.

As for the motion tabled by the Reform Party, I am pleased that my colleague agrees with it, although he would like to give it greater scope regarding government spending in general.

I wonder—and maybe my colleague could comment on that—if we should not only look at government spending but also at some institutions or programs which have always been in place and are very costly. As an example, I can mention the other place.

We are told that the Upper House costs \$43 million. An article was recently published in either *La Presse* or *Le Devoir*, I forget, which referred to some incredible costs. For example, there are 11 cabinet makers, as well as a gymnasium which only one member of the other place has been using regularly in the last four years.

Consequently, we have to take a look at this patronage haven, which is somewhat of a remnant of colonialism. Would it not be possible to make a cut, along with others, and thereby save a minimum of \$43 million?

As you know, in the minds of the Fathers of Confederation, the Upper House was meant to be a watchdog controlling the zeal of elected members, often to protect the interests of the rich but also of the general public. However, the situation changed progressively in the sense that interest groups have now come into existence all over the country and have direct access to the government. Consequently, the other place is no longer the repository of the public's claims.

Unfortunately, the Upper House has now become the place where an outgoing Prime Minister rewards political friends.

I am not saying that all the members of the other place got there like that, and I do not want to take anything away from their personal and professional qualifications. However, the fact is that the perception is, at least in Quebec, that the Upper House is useless and can even, on occasion, prevent the democratically elected members of Parliament from quickly implementing their decisions. The other place can sometime delay bills. This, added to the fact that it sat for only 43 days last year, makes it a very expensive proposition.

So, when we talk about spending cuts, should we not consider what the Official Opposition was suggesting yesterday, during another allotted day, and widen the terms of reference, as the Reform Party is suggesting today in its motion? Should we not widen the terms of reference to include not only government spending, but also to examine the *raison d'être* of some institutions, including the other place.

In a sense, I am a bit surprised that the Reform Party, which is advocating spending cuts, would rise in this House and wish that the members of the other place be elected. That would only further increase the expenditures and slow down the decision-making process. We do not need the other place anymore, because the regions are now very well represented, first in the House of Commons and also by special interest groups which