

Control of Government Expenditures

Again, Mr. Speaker, it is shameful to defraud in such a way the municipalities and all the taxpayers. Therefore I fully endorse the motion which enable us to set things right.

Thus it is high time:

—that Parliament take steps to exercise greater scrutiny and control over estimates and expenditures—

as it is said in that motion.

We do all we can here to help the government with our advice, our suggestions and even with the solutions we are proposing. They already have laughed at them and they tried to attack them. They make a pretence of ignoring them, but, Mr. Speaker, nevertheless our solutions are still there.

A healthy administration can be based only on a philosophy that guarantees individual freedom while ensuring security.

There should be security on every level. It is therefore urgent to start at the beginning and reform our monetary system in order to establish an economy which is fair, human and progressive. It is our duty to correct the inadequacies, injustices and stupidities of the present financial system.

As for the population, it is willing to accept mandatory reforms. Then, I shall be asked, how is it that everyone does not vote for the Cr ditistes? Mr. Speaker, during the next election campaign, the steamroller of election funds will again attempt to overwhelm all opposition.

It is not the Cr ditiste doctrine they will be attacking. It is known that people are ready to accept its implementation, but they will resort to demagoguery.

The hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Leblanc) gave me a little fore-taste of that this afternoon. He was taxing the Social Credit members with insufficient attendance at committee sittings. Besides, I notice that all government members, in their contributions, bring up that subject: the work achieved within the committees. However, the hon. member for Laurier is well aware that we cannot fraction ourselves in order to attend two, three or four committees simultaneously, committees which, moreover, operate more or less efficiently. Since we are unable to divide or multiply ourselves, at least before the elections we must voice our criticisms on the stages of the bills debated right here in the House, and that is what we are doing.

We did not convince our constituents through the use of money, propaganda, misleading advertising or—I almost said—through the support of the underworld. Only honesty, simplicity and the appeal of our doctrine convince the people. This is the greatest tribute that the people can pay to our sincerity because, Mr. Speaker, we convince the people in our constituencies through the force of conviction brought about by what we believe.

We are increasingly convinced that a great number of Canadians understand—because the present government has proved it himself clearly—that it is high time to change the system, to end this wasting of the taxpayer's money and to bring to everyone this security that we all wish we had.

[English]

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, the dollars and cents that have been wasted in

[Mr. Matte.]

the realm of government spending in recent years will probably never be known. Certainly it can be counted in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Perhaps in the minds of some it will ever be thus, but I am not prepared to accept the proposition or argument that this wasteful spending is something over which we have no control.

In the first place, it can be clearly demonstrated, I suggest, that inept political leadership at the ministerial level can be blamed for virtually all waste within the capital equipment spending program of the Canadian armed forces in recent years. From horses on the payroll all the way through to the DDH-280 program we have glaring examples of failure by political leaders to accept advice from professionals in the forces. We have the resultant and obvious end to which this has led us—wastage of money, purchase of ill-devised equipment and a national arts centre. Even worse, in virtually every case it can be very clearly demonstrated that inept political leadership has led to these bad decisions being made.

The mid-life overhaul of the *Bonaventure* is a classical example in which we saw responsible ministries of government fail to tell what I consider to be the full truth. They preferred to let professional serving officers and non-officers take the blame. It is to this waste and avoidance of public responsibility that I wish to direct a few thoughts in today's debate. Going back to the Bobcat, there was a wastage of \$9 million. We purchased 115 CF-5 aircraft at a cost of \$1,114,000 each. Incidentally only about 11 per cent of that program was put up for tender. What did we do with these aircraft? We have some in storage, we sold a few to Venezuela and some are being used for training. Their operational use is in question. Indeed, they were bought against good military advice. What have we done to compound this mistake? We have ordered an additional 20 aircraft. If they were no good in the first place, why are we buying more?

I think we must deal with the *Bonaventure*. This is probably as good a place as any to set out one case that may stand: I hope in fact it does stand as an example and substantiation of the claim that it is not always the professional public servant or professional soldier who is to blame. Prior to the calling of tenders in the mid-1960s for the mid-life overhaul of the *Bonaventure*, professional, naval and civilian engineers and other support staff in the dockyard at Halifax carried out a work requirement or job order. They advised DND headquarters in Ottawa that the mid-life overhaul would cost approximately \$14 million. That was not good enough. Instructions went back to these professionals instructing them not to change the job requirement but to substantially reduce the dollar content. Back came a revised estimate and another directive went to Halifax to substantially reduce it. Back to Ottawa came an estimate of \$8 million, which the Canadian public will recall was the amount at which the overhaul contract was let.

What was the final cost? Two figures are being quoted around the country. I am not certain which is correct. One is \$14 million plus, and the other is \$17 million. In any event, the point is that DND HQ was advised of the approximate dollars and cents cost and the government, for political purposes, instructed the professionals to reduce it. How can we continue to live in a country that tolerates this practice? Many Canadians, including