

Waste and Mismanagement

leadership on the part of the government. Naturally, when I said steps had to be taken to get the economy going again, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned among other things a few very important points, namely the weakening of our industry as a result of the flooding of the Canadian market with imported products, foreign products, inadequate funding to create employment in the economically weak areas and particularly the very high interest rates we have to pay on borrowings by federal, provincial and municipal governments and school boards.

The two hon. members who spoke before me talked abundantly of the waste of this government. I refer to the fact they forgot to mention—I hope they simply forgot to mention—the shameful waste that we have been witnessing and the fact that every day we are paying over \$17 million—\$17.9 million, to be more specific—in interest on this country's debt. And we of the Social Credit Party of Canada are convinced that it is a shameful waste because the Bank of Canada could readily be used to create the necessary credit and thus be indebted to ourselves rather than to foreigners. So, except for us, this government and the opposition forget to talk about those important things particularly trying to show the people of this country the mismanagement of this government in face of the constant waste going on day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, during that motion I introduced in November, 1977, I asked and still ask on behalf of the people of my riding, the people of Rimouski and the people in the Gaspé area in general, the government at that time to take immediate steps to ensure the freedom and security of workers, farmers, mothers and people in general. I also urged the government to create jobs for young people coming out of our universities or CEGEPs with big, beautiful diplomas, with big, beautiful parchments but who face nothingness—we have no job. Mr. Speaker, those people have courage and will, they want to earn a decent living. They face the incompetence of the government, unemployment, welfare and misery.

Mr. Speaker, as the incompetence of the government apparently became its trademark and as regional disparities are increasing, it becomes more and more difficult to find jobs in some areas. After the budgetary cuts, those same areas are also unnecessarily affected by those drastic measures, namely the less favoured areas, as I said earlier.

● (1610)

When I spoke last October 17 in reply to the Speech from the Throne, the rate of unemployment in my area was 15 per cent; in Quebec, only the Abitibi-Témiscamingue area had a higher unemployment rate, and only by a few decimal points. Today, Mr. Speaker, even if our area is represented in cabinet, even if all the neighbouring constituencies are Liberal, the rate of unemployment has, sad to say, climbed to 21.2 per cent; this is the highest in Quebec and comes right after the Corner Brook area in Newfoundland where the unemployment rate is 24.3 per cent. It is therefore important to remind everyone of

[Mr. Allard.]

this situation, Mr. Speaker. I always make a point of recalling this situation because I feel we must remove these economic disparities if we want Canada to develop in harmony. It is most discouraging to note, however, that the gap between rich and poor areas has again widened.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to come back to the relevancy of today's motion which concerns government waste. The latest example of this, and probably the most inexcusable, is certainly the famous \$23 million contract with General Instruments to launch the notorious and short-lived Loto Select. Once again, the federal government did all it could to go over the heads of the provinces and do what it wanted while interfering underhandedly in an area of provincial jurisdiction. In addition to the financial losses caused by the cancellation of this contract, there was also the arrogance that this government showed toward the provinces. But the provinces no longer tolerate this type of interference and are showing an ever more united front, so the government had to backpedal and the Canadian taxpayers, that is all of us, now have to pay the piper without having danced to the tune and to suffer from the incompetence of the government opposite.

Mr. Speaker, on October 23 last, the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) asked to be allowed to make a very small additional loan of \$17 billion for so-called operating expenditures. The financial requirements of the government reached astronomical proportions at the same time as all sorts of things were done to save \$4 billion by cutting back very important existing services. During that time, the Bank of Canada exhausted its reserves to support our drowning dollar, which has been trying to surface for several months already, but to no avail, Mr. Speaker, since the dollar stayed at 85 cents and floated between something over 85 cents and 84 cents, to the great satisfaction, it seems, of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner).

The government has also invested in all sorts of programs of doubtful need and effectiveness. We could talk, for instance, of all the commissions on prices that we have seen. We have had the Prices Review Board, the Anti-Inflation Board, the Centre for the Study of Inflation and Productivity, and finally, the National Commission on Inflation. I would like to know the cost of establishing and dismantling all those commissions, which have been totally ineffective and, in any case, never had any real power.

What about real estate resources? We now have more office space than we need because the public service will curtail its expansion and even cut back staff in some instances. It will even be worse with a Progressive Conservative government since that party intends to cut 60,000 government jobs. Also, the government decentralization will also affect the surplus of space. The government has shown a complete lack of foresight. I hope it knows where it is going. In any event, the final verdict belongs to the people and it will come soon.