

for the government to do these things. If they do not, we will be doing them before too long.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: I hope my friends to my left will join with us in our attempt to achieve our objection through this debate. Both the New Democratic Party and the Creditistes have supported us in other motions we have presented. I hope they will continue to do so. That is the reason we did not put this motion in the form of a confidence motion, as we might have. At this stage, this situation is too serious and we want their support. I know the NDP have been having a few problems recently. They have been so busy concealing their doctrines with one hand and covering their dogma with the other that they stand almost indecently exposed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: But, I hope they will join with us in meeting one of the most serious situations in this country. When the estimates are included in an appropriation bill on the final opposition day, it will be our intention to challenge and vote on certain items. I hope the government will make public its position before that item. Will it regard the loss of an important supplementary item such as Information Canada as a question of confidence? What will be the position of the government on this? What will be the position of my friends to the left? We intend to treat our responsibility seriously in this matter and make a valiant, reasonable and diligent effort to bring this monster of government under some kind of control.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: The former Auditor General has had a lot to say in his report. We must bear in mind that the Auditor General's report is prepared by more than one man. The Auditor General holds that office together with members of his staff. They are competent, diligent, hard-working, independent people who do a very tough job under circumstances which have not been made easy by the efforts of this government. The Auditor General's report has stated that expenditures are now \$20 billion. By the time we take into account certain loans, advances and future payments which will be presented in the form of supplementary estimates before we finish with this fiscal year, the figure will be well over \$20 billion. The Auditor General has made reference to this fact and has pointed out the dangers.

I suggest that hon. members read carefully the Auditor General's report. I hope they do. It should be done in the proper way. It is like drinking brandy. You put it in a snifter, sniff it quite often and drink it drop by drop. Only in this way can you get the full flavour of the report. It cannot be done hastily. It must be done with competence, diligence and patience. You have to be a good reader to understand what it is all about. If hon. members opposite do that, they may have a completely different approach to this particular issue.

What is to be seen behind the dry language of the accountant and the lawyer is the unfolding of the details of a fiscal assault of massive proportions against the tax-

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payer, with completely inadequate weapons given to those representing the people to repel the assault or even to uncover the details. The federal government first woos the voters with deceptive and seductive calls for the implementation of great new social and welfare proposals, always concealing the true escalation of costs. Then, there is established a huge bureaucratic machine with a new minister or ministers and their accompanying menageries, and ultimately parallel provincial counterparts.

The inevitable result is a spending program of enormous stupidity and duplication, waste and extravagance. The unfortunate taxpayer is then sternly told he will have to pay for the great benefits which a kindly and benevolent government has conferred upon him. When the Auditor General, in pursuance of his duties, attempts to ferret out and detail what these expenditures are, the government says that he is snooping and is going beyond his authority. Their subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, methods delay and impede any attempt to examine the control of expenditures in the detail required.

To add insult to injury, the federal government, having fixed a habit on the people like drugs for an addict, calmly suggest that they should pull out and leave the resulting mess as well as the massive costs to be dealt with by the provinces. This is what this meeting in Ottawa today is all about. I have some views, as do others, on what is going on in this city today. These eleven people, the sultans, caliphs, emperors and the Caesar from Ottawa are like eleven doctors conducting a premature postmortem and autopsy on a still breathing and struggling taxpayer. This is what it amounts to. Some day I would like to see a federal-provincial conference with one item on the agenda, finding ways and means to reduce the huge duplication of administrative expenditures. I may not live to see the day unless in the near future this Conservative party forms the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: I suggest to the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher), who is now making more noise than usual, and sometimes it is a good noise, that he will support what I have to say today. I know this is how he feels. I want him and some of his colleagues to say they feel this way. Let them be honourable members, speak up and say they agree with me. I know that is the way many of them feel. All they need is a little courage to stand up and say so.

My time is limited. I want to refer briefly to some of the comments contained in the Auditor General's report. Although I should like to deal with all of them, time will not permit. I am referring, Mr. Speaker, to the report of the Auditor General for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1972.

● (1220)

It is one of the fundamental principles of our constitutional heritage that the House of Commons control the finances of the country.

Who disagrees with that assertion? Yet it is not the case today. How many hon. members can stand up and honestly say that this situation exists in parliament, in this House of Commons, today?

An hon. Member: No one.