

Appropriation Act

proper over-all audit is done. This is a must. It is the taxpayers' money and this government has a duty toward taxpayers.

By not bringing in legislation for programs such as the ones referred to, those which I cannot find in the estimates without a great deal more research, but which fall within the ambit of my motion, this government is circumventing parliament and the people of Canada. The only recourse left to us in too many cases is to vote against the government estimates. Yet in many cases, unfortunately, such programs have been disguised; they are hidden. They are wrapped around legitimate votes which we want to support. Vote 10, which includes the LIP program, if we voted against it, would cut off many other things such as payments to the provinces for other purposes.

The influence of bureaucratic advisers on policy decisions is becoming very great indeed. But we must never forget that the bureaucrats, unlike members of parliament, are not elected by the people. I recognize that they have the advantage of technical expertise but they have not the obligation that I and members of this House have to the people of Canada to ensure that their well-being and their tax dollars are properly protected. We in this House have the responsibility to represent the electorate and consider the national interest of Canada. As it stands, too much of the public purse is subject to little political control by politically irresponsible people. I use the word "irresponsible" here in the proper, non-critical sense.

A number of calculations will show that 1 per cent of the programs which fall within the ambit of my motion for this year are beyond the control, purview and survey of parliament.

Another criticism that I should like to level at LIP, OFY and such programs is that they give rise to unrequitable expectations. I think others may want to elaborate on this aspect of my motion. Some local initiatives programs really use imagination and initiative; let us recognize that. They provide services that are needed in the community—taking elderly folk to their medical appointments, getting handicapped children about, financing recycling projects. But when funds run out at the end of May, or possibly June, the community, the municipality or the province is left to go on financing the project or being subjected to violent criticism by the citizens for their failure to do so. Where are they to find their funds?

Projects aimed at unemployment problems should perhaps concentrate on municipal works programs that can be completed, not on social service programs which, by their nature, are ongoing.

In drawing my comments to a close, Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind this House of the importance of the motion before us. Constitutionally, it is the parliamentary stage of policy-making in the form of legislation that is the most critical process, for parliament is legally supreme.

I want to suggest four steps we should follow in considering programs in this way. In the first place, I suggest that a decision should be taken by parliament as to whether these and similar programs are worth-while. That is the first thing that has to be decided. Are they just stop-gap measures? If there is a permanent need that has to be met,

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

is it a need that the federal government is required to fill directly or indirectly, or should it be through the appropriate provincial authorities? Once that is decided then guidelines for filling that need should be drawn up, or at least approved, again by parliament.

Next, decisions need to be taken in respect of funding, and this includes auditing. That is parliament's business. Projects should not be cut off at an arbitrary date. Why cut them off at the end of May? Is it because they are winter works projects?

Finally, the whole deal should be couched in its appropriate legislative form and become a statutory program, not one relying on pressures that can be brought to bear on ministers for one cause or another, but one that stands comfortably because it has parliamentary approval. Mr. Speaker, I hope that this motion will be referred to the appropriate committee for further study.

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words on the motion of the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) regarding his proposal that government programs of over \$5 million expenditure and over a year in length should be incorporated into a detailed statute for parliamentary study.

As we are all aware, at the present time these estimates lie buried in the various departments and it is very difficult for members to scrutinize them thoroughly.

The hon. member's motion relates to the problem of creating jobs in Canada, and specifically to the comprehensive Local Initiatives Program, the Opportunities for Youth program and, possibly, the recently announced New Horizons program which funds projects by senior citizens. Let us recognize from the outset that OFY and LIP are temporary, make work programs that have met with some success, but certainly in no way have alleviated unemployment in this country.

• (1720)

The OFY and LIP programs have been in operation for a few years. Those programs, introduced to answer certain needs, have existed for some years, as I said, and we have seen during this trial period how they have worked. I suggest the time has now come for us to question more rigidly the criteria, purposes and successes of these programs.

The recent revelations of the Auditor General, who complained to the present parliament as well as to the previous one about the trend of the government to make spending decisions without reference to parliament, have disturbed me. I think the process should be arrested. The Opportunities for Youth program, which does not come before parliament for scrutiny, is a controversial one and has been the subject of a fair degree of criticism.

Let me refer to a recent internal memo circulated in the Treasury Board a couple of months ago which examined the 1972 Opportunities for Youth program, a program costing the taxpayer of Canada some \$34 million in that year. I understand that the cost has risen to \$40 million. That memo, in a major criticism of the OFY program, suggested that the objectives of the program were vaguely defined and that participants were poorly selected. I quite