

Restraint of Government Expenditures

the generous suggestion that a royal commission be set up. I understand that the people have even been named who are to constitute the commission. This commission is supposed to go over what has already been gone into in detail by the experts who were involved with the Auditor General in preparing his report. It would appear that the government was given some choice bits of advance information on this.

One look at this bill will prove that it was put together in a hurry and was not carefully studied, or in fact designed to curb government spending. The idea that this bill will cut \$1½ billion from the government's spending estimates is just too ludicrous to consider. That is the reason why we are debating Bill C-19.

For a government that is spending more than 40 per cent of the gross national product a mere billion dollars is petty cash, hardly enough to pay the personal travel expenses of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) and possibly some others. This is peanuts, and rather than save money in areas where spending should be cut, passage of this bill will do untold damage to our milling, grain and flour interests, particularly in the Maritimes and in the western provinces.

● (2130)

The President of the Treasury Board said, when he introduced this bill on November 5, that it is an omnibus bill. What else is new? The government does not seem to know how to table anything but omnibus bills. It is a good way to force this House to approve bad measures in order to see a good measure pass. What other government would link the Company of Young Canadians with a measure to cut off subsidies now being paid under the Railway Act? What other government would ask us to help wipe out that massive boondoggle called Information Canada in the same bill that would eliminate the present adult training?

I should like to ask why the government did not simply table the bill to get rid of the Company of Young Canadians once and for all? There is hardly a member in the House who would not have welcomed the opportunity to send that outfit packing. We could have accomplished that simple act long ago, but for reasons of its own the government decided that it would be more expeditious to lump that into a bill which would do irreparable harm in areas where more, and not less, assistance is warranted.

While I am at it I should like to ask who authorized payment of \$185,500 in severance pay to the so-called volunteer members of the Company of Young Canadians? The Auditor General stated the other day in his report that the CYC Act did not give the company authority to make such payments. These payments were made at a time when the CYC was supposed to be in the process of being dissolved, and I think that parliament should be informed as to who authorized the payment of that money and why it was authorized. I know that the government does not place much store by accountability where the public is concerned, but perhaps we can make a start in that direction by having someone tell us about that \$185,500. Just clearing up ten of such cases would

[Mr. Darling.]

go a long way toward making up a good deal of the money that the government hopes to save in this bill. I believe the estimate is \$1.5 billion. Possibly it should be developing some healthy habits of accountability among some of our senior public servants, or should I say public spenders.

We could easily have passed a bill in this House putting a merciful end to Information Canada, but I suppose the government needed time to find cushy jobs for those who would be displaced by the demise of that ill-conceived agency. Of course the government that created Information Canada would not consider it ill-conceived. The plain fact is that it was established in the first place to provide jobs for Liberal party faithful, people who had served their masters well in many ways and who were promised appropriate rewards. Some of them performed admirably in such endeavours as the B and B Commission. As it happens always, Information Canada grew like Topsy. It became an expensive bureaucratic monster, duplicating functions assigned to other people and agencies, functions being performed better than Information Canada could undertake them.

All of us at this time would like to see the CYC and Information Canada get a decent burial, and yet here they are again, coming back to haunt us in an omnibus bill that seeks to disrupt the whole pattern of transportation subsidies for the grain, flour and milling industries. On November 10 the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) chided the Minister of Transport for proposing that certain sections of the Railway Act be repealed without telling us what the alternatives would be. That is not new, Mr. Speaker, and that is why these proposals are locked into an omnibus bill, a bill that contains a couple of items which most if not all of us are interested in coming to grips with at this time.

We might well ask what the alternatives are to the proposals in this bill dealing with adult training. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) must have some plan or program in mind to improve the training of unemployed adults. There are so many of them now, about three quarters of a million I believe, that the minister surely has some plan to deal with the problem of adults who are unemployed because they lack the skills they need to find jobs.

Are we going to continue concentrating on training adults to perform tasks for which there are no job openings, at levels of pay that are below the welfare levels? Are we going to continue to peck away at adult training as though we hope that the problem will go away after a while if we just ignore it, or that perhaps various provinces will come up with solutions of their own? This is not a problem that will go away. It can only get worse, and the provinces cannot be expected to solve the problem on their own.

At the very bottom of page two in Bill C-19 we find the following words:

But in no case shall the weekly allowance be less than \$20.00 per week.

Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, this quotation refers to the allowance authorized to be paid to an adult occupational trainee under the present regulations. Naturally that does not