

other bureaucrats who have called the shots so wrongly in this country for so many years, exactly what he is expected to follow as far as economic policy is concerned, and he is very dutifully doing what he is told. What a shocking thing! In Canada's day of economic need we have a Minister of Finance who is not a servant of the public but simply a servant of public servants.

One might shift and say, "Well, the saviour is obviously going to be the President of the Treasury Board, because under the Financial Administration Act his mandate is very clear." Contrary to the public impression, it is the President of the Treasury Board who has the responsibility to restrain and contain expenditures as far as government is concerned. So you might turn to him because he is the man who will somehow right the ship and ensure that these rising deficits to which I referred will not materialize.

● (1730)

Here again I am disappointed with some of the comments which the President of the Treasury Board has made. For example, he stated that it is not so much a question of containing expenditures but rather of increasing the revenue which we need to somehow bring the deficit down in Canada. I say that should sound an alarm with everybody in the House because essentially it is saying: do not turn to government to trim costs, do not lessen government expenditure; that is not necessarily the answer; the answer lies with the already over-taxed public which should be paying more in the form of taxation. That is what is coming down the pipe.

As I have indicated earlier, a disaster is coming. I should also like to indicate that what we are going to be asked to pass at a later date is a substantial corporate and personal income tax increase. To the degree that the government calls upon Canadians to pay more in income and other tax, it is going to be evidence of their failure to control their own expenditures. It is as simple as that.

I would invite all hon. members to read the little booklet written by the President of the Treasury Board entitled "Fiscal calamity—How to survive Canada's tax chaos". The President of the Treasury Board wrote this in 1974 when, presumably, other influences were brought to bear on him. I ask hon. members to pay attention to the following introduction in the book, which reads:

This book is dedicated to all Canadians who share my belief that Canada, with its beauty, its resources, its people, and its legal-political heritage, could be a country of unequalled opportunity and happiness, were it not for too much taxation, too strong a bureaucracy, too much government, too much welfare, too many politicians, and too few statesmen.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stevens: Think of it, Mr. Speaker. Here we have a President of the Treasury Board who is given, under an act of this Parliament, the responsibility to handle the bureaucracy, to handle expenditures and certainly to have influence on taxation, having written what I have just quoted in 1974, and who now indicates to the press and in the House that he believes expenditures are not the real problem, that the question is to get more revenue.

Employment Tax Credit Act

What has changed from 1974 to 1980? I can tell you that one thing has changed. When the then Mr. Donald J. Johnston wrote the book to which I am referring, total federal government spending was approximately \$20 billion. He might not have known about the statement made by the Minister of Finance—but he has to accept some responsibility for a statement which has been given to the House—in which the House was told that in the current year our spending was going up to \$60 billion, triple what Mr. Johnston referred to in 1974 as something that was "fiscal calamity". What has changed? Would he not agree that if it were fiscal calamity back in 1974, it is triple fiscal calamity now because it has tripled in size?

In 1974, sure, we had deficit problems, but we certainly had no deficit problem compared to the \$14 billion budgetary deficit which we are told to expect this year. The deficit this year is 70 per cent of the total federal government spending in 1973-74, the very year Mr. Johnston wrote his book trying to alert the Canadian public to the fiscal calamity into which he thought we were heading.

At a later date I intend to go at length into more of the comments made by Mr. Johnston in his book because I think there is a strange transformation which has taken place; a person who was so concerned and alarmed at that time has now become party to putting in place the very expenditure levels and deficit levels that only a few years ago he felt would lead us to fiscal calamity, as he called it.

How best can we relate this? I often feel that we sit here in Parliament oblivious of reality, almost as if we were aboard a ship at sea. We know where the shoals are, we see them coming, but for some reason nobody seems to want to do anything about them. I was very surprised to learn in the last year how the previous government—I say "previous government" only in a sense; the government which existed before the Clark government, which has been resurrected in the form of the present government—

An hon. Member: Voted in by the people of Canada; do not forget that.

Mr. Stevens: I was very surprised to learn how their decision making processes had been developed while they had been governing this country from reading what had happened at their cabinet meetings and who said what on various things. I only wish the Canadian public could be exposed to the type of discussions which took place at those cabinet meetings so that they could judge the calibre of the people conducting the affairs of Canada.

An hon. Member: You should release yours.

Mr. Stevens: As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the reasons we felt that freedom of information legislation was long overdue in this country. It is time that some of these so-called governmental secrets were released and the Canadian public were allowed to see the ineptitude of this government in former years in conducting the affairs of Canada.

I say this because what I found most startling when, for example, we come to the question of restraint was to learn that