

### Government Orders

that was not used very much. All this money went into this infrastructure and very little materialized out of it.

We can never neglect the idea that regional development policies on the part of the federal government are very important to the regions of this country. At the same time, as a federal government we have an obligation to ensure that the money we hand over to somebody else is going to be spent on the things it was meant for.

How are we going to be able to say that the money that is collected should go to the Canada Pension Plan? We have a special fund for that. It is allocated there. Much of the money goes into the general taxation fund which provides a lot of flexibility in how the money is spent. Also, if an agreement is drawn up very loosely it allows the recipients of that money to be very flexible.

• (1320 )

I remember Premier Buchanan of Nova Scotia blasting forth at me in *The Halifax Chronicle Herald* because I did not know what I was doing and so on.

If I did not know what I was doing then neither did the Auditor General of Canada. I would suggest that the Auditor General of Canada and the chairman of the public accounts committee knew more about what was going on than Premier Buchanan wanted to admit. This debate went on.

The point I want to make is this. If we are going to collect tax money in Canada to the extent that we are today, let us first make sure that the money is properly labelled and let us have some review to make sure that that money is being spent for the purpose for which it was meant in the first place. Only if we are very careful in the spending of tax dollars in all areas of government will we be able to have a firm, solid, valid and a long-term medicare plan in Canada and a Canada Pension Plan.

My hon. friend to my left who spoke on the Canada Pension Plan and some of the technicalities of it a while ago brought out some of the very specific needs in that plan. My bottom line is simply this. We have an obligation to make sure that those tax dollars are used properly and specifically. If there is any adverse spending or anyone getting great ideas that they are going to do something else with it then they should be reprimanded and brought to task for it.

I want to say to my colleague on my left here, the hon. member for Vanier, that I hope as the new chairman of the public accounts committee he will be very much on the job to see to it that the Auditor General's report is followed up on and that any inequities or any bad spending practices are looked at by that committee and recommendations are made to this House.

One good thing about the public accounts committee is that it can make some very strong reports and recommendations to this House of Commons. The government must respond to them within a certain number of days or within a certain number of months. The committee puts the deadline on that.

It is very important that we have these programs in place. Let us be good tax spenders. This is in addition to being good tax collectors as this government is certainly proving to be. Over the years it has been far beyond our means.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Madam Speaker, as I was listening to my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke I began to think how much more productive these debates can be. Sometimes they are even better than Question Period.

We can deal with issues in a more substantive way. Here today he described well a condition that exists for a major employer in his community, Eddy Match, which through the legalese of a particular act has been frustrated in executing his job.

The member has been in this House for over 26 years. He has seen thousands of different bills come and go. I would like to ask the member if he thinks that maybe the spirit of these laws is dwindling away and the letter of the law or the bureaucracy of the law is taking precedence over the fact that these bills are basically there and ultimately there to provide a public good.

I do not say that public servants do this with ill will but sometimes I think they may lose a sense or a focus of what the Public Service is really supposed to be.

Rather than provide maximum administrative delay on a particular issue they are there to facilitate. They should be looking more at the spirit of the law rather than the letter.

**Mr. Hopkins:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member raises some very good points. He talked about the spirit of the laws. I would say that the spirit of the free trade law, for example, goes down the drain when you have such