

public authorities; yet, every year, taxpayers have to pay for that institution.

Those taxpayers have the right to ask themselves questions. However, it was not until 1991 that an audit was conducted for the first time. The Auditor General tabled a report on the administration of the Senate and made 27 recommendations. He said that the Senate is a unique institution operating in a rapidly changing framework. Senate management is different from that of a department, a public organization or a private business. Being a legislative body, the Senate can define and adopt most of the rules which have a bearing on its activity.

Consequently, the usual accountability rules do not apply. Even if you argue that the budget has been decreasing in recent years, it is not enough. Only minor cuts were made to the 1994-95 budget. For example, no Senate employee will be laid off, while thousands of positions are being abolished in the public service. There were 450 person-years in 1992-93, and there will be 447 in 1994-95. The numbers change only because of attrition, retirements and resignations. Six senators will retire this year. Unlike federal public servants, they will be replaced very quickly by friends of the people sitting on the other side.

Quebec and Canadian taxpayers must pay for the Senate. Yet, more than ever before, public money should be spent in a useful way. We must ask ourselves if it is appropriate to maintain the Upper House, considering all the costs involved. Why is a non-elected House allocated public funds which could be better used? Why, in the present context, should we continue to pay for an institution which has no fundamental reason to exist?

We live with a constitutional status quo. The situation is that the Senate continues to exist. How can we tolerate such a situation?

• (1850)

This status quo results in the continued existence of the Upper House, as well as the continued existence of major costs. This is what is happening. The Senate is the best example of the apathy of our federalism. That federalism is removed from the reality. In fact, discussions on a reform of the Senate began soon after Confederation, and, in the last 20 years or so, the number of studies, reports and proposals has increased significantly. The situation which persists is also the result of unacceptable federal proposals and is unacceptable for Quebec.

Therefore, I firmly support the motion tabled by the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe, opposing the vote of \$26 million under the heading Parliament—The Senate—Program expenditures.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Supply

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And more than five members having risen:

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Pursuant to the order made earlier today, a recorded division on the question now before the House stands deferred until 10 p.m. later today, at which time the bells will be sounded for not more than 15 minutes.

[English]

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 5—PARLIAMENT

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Vote 5 in the amount of \$164,985,000 under the heading Parliament—House of Commons—Program expenditures, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1995 (less the amount voted in interim supply) be concurred in.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to join in this very important debate. I would like to report to this House and to our listeners on what we, as a government and as members, have accomplished during the past months.

On October 25, in the last election, Canadians voted massively for change. The hon. member said a change for the better, and that is true, we have had a Liberal government since October 25. In this massive vote for change, Canadians sent more than 200 new members to the House of Commons in Ottawa. For me as the Government Whip, it was a challenge to organize the allocation of offices on Parliament Hill as well as the proceedings of this House. At times it was a difficult task, but it was a challenge and a very important one.