

*Government of Canada*

we will see better auditing and greater attention paid to annual reports as a result of their efforts.

It has been stated that many annual reports are shelved and little attention is paid to them. Since many of them are referred to a committee, perhaps it is the committees that should spend more time on these reports.

From time to time, the Auditor General makes an in depth audit of a particular government Department. As a Veterans Affairs' spokesman a few years ago, I found an extensive audit of Veterans Affairs by the Auditor General most helpful. As a result of that information, we were able to clean up the Veterans Affairs Department, which was being run very poorly.

I want to take this opportunity today to pay tribute to the late J.J. Macdonell, who was Canada's Auditor General prior to Mr. Dye. He introduced comprehensive auditing to Canada, and I am informed that he was one of the leaders in the world in introducing such a procedure.

Comprehensive auditing means value for money, which deals with efficiency, economy and devising measures to assess the effectiveness of auditing. Our present Auditor General, Mr. Kenneth Dye, has continued the fine work that was introduced by Macdonell. He is President of IDI, an international organization of supreme audit institutions. Its members form the national audit offices of countries belonging to the United Nations. Our Auditor General is showing leadership in helping the Third World countries have proper and effective auditing systems.

We must also pay tribute to our Auditor General for having probably one of the most efficient offices in government. His office works at 81 per cent productivity, which I believe is probably the most efficient of any government Department or Crown corporation. He must be congratulated for his efforts in obtaining such productivity in his office.

Our Public Accounts Committee will be dealing more extensively with productivity in the New Year. This is important because millions of dollars can be saved with increased productivity throughout the whole government system. There will never be 100 per cent efficiency with big government. We have big government in Canada which the majority of Canadians want. But they will have to understand it will cost them a lot of money, because it is so unwieldy.

● (1740)

I wish to point out that the Auditor General has congratulated the Government for making a lot of improvements in efficiency, and his reports are not as damaging as they have been in the past. The Auditor General's reports are most helpful to Government, Crown corporations, and different Departments in order for them to clean up their act, so to speak.

I also must congratulate my hon. friend, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, on the tenth

report. They have certainly gone to great lengths in making recommendations for proper accountability throughout the whole system. I hope that the Government pays strict attention to this tenth annual report. A lot of effort has gone into it, and there are many excellent suggestions and recommendations in this report.

The motion presented by my friend, the Hon. Member for York East speaks directly to the account to be taken of any performance indicators and other quantitative measures relevant to an evaluation of a Department's operations. I believe that the establishment of an evaluation procedure and uniform guidelines for government Departments, boards, Crown corporations and agencies to base their annual reports on would establish a system by which those reports could be most effectively compiled.

The Australian model endeavours to pursue such ends, and much of what I am saying here today is gleaned from their experience. The Australian model offers much in terms of streamlining the annual reports of government Departments, boards, Crown corporations, and agencies.

The following criteria exemplify the standards begged by this particular motion: The clarification of a Department's over-all function through the detailed reference to each division of a Department as well as its various branches; the integration of the objectives of a Department and a review of its operations so that there is some sense of how well that Department has been performing, and what, in the Department's view, are the relevant indicators. Because a Department is a large and complicated organization with responsibility for a wide range of related activities, the format chosen to serve as a sensible exposition should be detailed yet well proportioned; provide a brief introduction and overview of major or recent developments; relate management structures to the working environment; and provide an informative account of the Department's consultative mechanisms with other bodies.

Such reporting would be able to ensure a strong early focus on management issues, to allow frank statements of administrative problems and policies, and to provide, through an informative appendix, a listing of statistics on a range of important matters. Departments should be more selective, concentrating on those statistics that are relevant performance indicators in respect of a Department's basic responsibilities.

In the financial area, this motion concerns the use of program or functional statements of expenditures, the reporting of future commitments, and the details of any separate funds administered by Departments.

The demand for an annual report arises from the community interest in the accountability of public bodies. Whatever else reports might hope to do, they must address this demand. Information provided in a report should be relevant to this primary task, and in this regard there should be a judicious selection of tables and statistics to give the reader a well-informed picture of the Department's actual workload.