

Canadian taxpayers are now demanding that governments spend their tax dollars efficiently and effectively. I do not believe that we or the Canadian taxpayers have the luxury of exempting crown corporations from these special examinations. Everyone must be held to a standard of financial accountability.

The cynicism people have about government can be partly attributed to the waste and mismanagement that can be found in government. We should take every step possible to address this issue and promote the effective use of tax dollars.

I urge all members of this House to support this motion. I urge the government to introduce legislation to act upon these recommendations of the Auditor General and to make these crown corporations more accountable for their financial practices by moving them into part X of the Financial Administration Act.

Members of this House not only campaigned on accountability, but each and every day we all use those words. We must be accountable. If we are going to talk the talk, we must walk the walk. This is an opportunity to show the Canadian public that this government will be truly different from previous governments.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I compliment the member from Okanagan on his speech. My ears picked up when I heard him talk about the National Arts Centre. I am not going to disagree with what the member had to say. In fact, I agree there has been a siege mentality at the National Arts Centre that must be overcome.

● (1555)

However, I think that one of the main stumbling blocks is gone. The director general of the National Arts Centre was released from his position just a few weeks ago by the board of the National Arts Centre. I think the number one siege mentality was there.

I think we have to go one step further. I believe that the National Arts Centre must be responsible to this Parliament. Presently it is responsible to Treasury Board. The chairman of the board was appointed by an Order in Council and he was reappointed for another five-year term just prior to the previous government leaving office. I think that has to be corrected before we can get an active input into how the National Arts Centre is maintained.

The National Arts Centre is a Canadian institution. It is the arts centre of all Canadians and it is something that we should all be proud of. I cannot remember the dollar figure but a few dollars from every Canadian went to build that project and it is something that we should all be proud of. It is not Ottawa's. It is not ours just because we live in the nation's capital.

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We have to move beyond what has been happening there and look forward to the future and develop our arts and develop our orchestra so that we can all be proud of it right across this country.

I am agreeing with the member. I am not disagreeing. I want us to move forward and make the centre responsible to this Parliament so that he and I as parliamentarians can have some input and some say into how it is being operated.

I do not have a question. I am just agreeing with the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Well it is Friday and in that spirit of agreement, would the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt wish to comment?

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her comments. Each and every day that I sit in this Parliament as something new in my career, I find it very enjoyable that we can find common ground among many of the players in this House. I would like to thank the member for her comment. The Canadian people do require accountability and I think it is incumbent upon us to supply it for them.

[Translation]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I certainly did not want us to run out of speakers towards the end, and since I saw no one else who wished to speak, I thought I would take this opportunity to put to my colleague some questions about the motion before us today.

We talked about a lot of things, I mean all kinds of things, but it does not change the fact that we have before us a motion of about 1,000 words that just calls on the government, and I quote:

— to demonstrate its commitment to accountability and to the efficient and effective use of public funds by reporting to the House, no later than the first week of June each year, what measures have been taken—

to review the deficiencies in various departments.

Does our colleague know that, according to current parliamentary procedure, we do have a framework within which we are able to undertake every year a complete review of the budget estimates of every department, particularly as, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), any parliamentary committee can undertake a detailed study on any matter, without asking anyone's permission, as long as the committee does not travel outside the national capital region?

Third, if expenditures are incurred, the public accounts committee is empowered to examine all previous expenditures, including the report of the Auditor General.

I did not want to miss this opportunity to raise the following question: Are the members opposite trying to do what the members from the Bloc did yesterday, that is, create even more duplication and overlap, contrary to what they are supposedly advocating?