

Supply

member's bill. The purpose of the bill is to allow the Auditor General to present interim reports throughout the year, a move which would give parliamentarians a greater role to play in the affairs of government.

I think that the government should take Bill C-207 introduced by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier and reintroduce it, either as is or in some other form, as a government bill to which improvements could be made in committee.

As I noted earlier, the Reform Party motion tabled in this House by the hon. member for St. Albert contains eight separate items. It is difficult to examine even one item thoroughly, much less the entire motion.

For example, item (e) calls upon the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to address problems relating to the rights of aboriginal peoples. This is one area on which the Auditor General has focussed.

I think that this is a very interesting proposal. The federal Indian Act made native peoples second-class citizens by confining them to reserves and treating them as wards of the state, without giving any thought to the fact that they had the legitimate right to govern themselves as they saw fit, under the broad terms of the Canadian Constitution.

In the early 1980s, Quebec worked hard to prove to the other Canadian provinces and to the federal government that it was possible, working within the framework of the current Constitution and with the openings afforded by section 35 of the 1982 Constitution, to give native peoples a greater opportunity to find their own way, one which would be defined as openly as possible, and, after so many years of federal trusteeship, to recognize their right to native self-government.

This was just wishful thinking, of course. We have long been advocating an end to overlap and duplication of services between the federal and provincial governments. We are pleased to a certain degree to hear the hon. member for St. Albert and his party call for this kind of action, since we have studied this issue at considerable length. The Bélanger-Campeau Commission in Quebec very aptly recommended an end to overlap.

The Bloc Québécois' mission is to bring an end to overlap once and for all. This will come about when sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act of 1867 are repealed. In the meantime, we will do everything we can to limit the damage inflicted on us by the Constitution Act of 1867.

• (1225)

But, as long as we are Canadian taxpayers, we in Quebec will continue to keep a close watch on things to ensure that the situation we inherit—and we will inherit our share of both assets and liabilities—is the best it can be. It is with this objective in mind that we will continue to work in the House to improve or stabilize the situation.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his well-prepared speech. I would also like to congratulate the hon. member of the Reform party who put forward this motion which calls for many things. It is an appeal to the government to act in the interests of taxpayers.

There is a certain resemblance—and I am certain that my hon. colleague will agree with me on this—between the motion before us today and the one presented yesterday by the Official Opposition as part of the two allotted opposition days this week. Both motions reflect a will to cut government expenditures. Yesterday, we proposed the striking of a special committee which would review departmental spending item by item. Savings would be realized simply because expenses would be disclosed. The motion put forward today is similar, but refers specifically to certain sectors.

The government's pat answer is that we have the public accounts committee to look into spending matters.

This morning, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, who used to chair the public accounts committee, told us that the latter had passed resolutions similar to the motion put forward by the Reform party. The committee wanted to do exactly what the Official Opposition is advocating now, but the government was never willing to go along.

All day yesterday, and again today, the government stubbornly maintains that the public accounts committee can do its job. Of course it can, but then the government must take its recommendations into account.

If a special committee representing all parties in this House, including independent members, could review, item by item, all departmental spending, it seems to me that its influence would be greater, more far-reaching. It would exert even greater moral pressure on the government and would have the support of all parties to carry out these spending cuts.

This is why I would like my hon. colleague to tell me whether or not my remarks tie in with what he was saying shortly before oral question period.

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Richelieu for his comments and question.

I believe the hon. member was referring to the first part of my speech to which he listened closely, since after an interruption of more than one and a half hours, he was able to focus in on the point I was making. Before statements from members, I was saying how odd it was that Bill C-207 dated February was sponsored by the former chairman of the public accounts committee under the late lamented Conservative government. The bill calls for interim, sequential reports to be issued throughout the year so that reviewing public finances becomes a routine matter and members are finally able to fulfil their real mandates as parliamentarians.