

presume Members of Parliament read what they are passing. The Auditor General, however, said that it should not apply to subsequent years. But Parliament said it was to be for subsequent years.

If there is any erosion of power, it is certainly not the erosion of the power of Parliament. It may be a change in direction, but it is something that was done with the approval of Parliament. If Parliament does not want to exercise its responsibility by authorizing expenditures which would occur in subsequent years, then it should not do so. But members should not come back and cry "wolf", saying they as parliamentarians made a mistake and therefore the government is at fault. We cannot expect the government to run a training program for Members of Parliament so they will know what they are doing before they do it. That is their responsibility and I would hope they would exercise it.

An hon. Member: That is arrogance.

Mr. Cafik: I do not see anything arrogant about expecting Members of Parliament to do their homework before they exercise their responsibility. I recall a time in the public accounts committee when members were surprised when they found they had passed a particular vote. I do not think that is something about which a Member of Parliament should be proud.

The last point I want to make concerns the whole question of the mismanagement of public funds. I have been a member of the public accounts committee since 1968. I think all Members of Parliament will agree that the public accounts committee ably carries out its role in trying to make sure there is no waste of public funds. The *Bonaventure* is a good case in point. I personally spent over a year working on a one-man committee to try to expose the problems involved, so I do not need to produce my credentials in that regard.

● (1520)

I think one thing we must understand is that the report of the Auditor General is a report to Parliament through the committee of public accounts. It is not a report that we can prejudge at this moment. For that reason I am not bringing forward statements made in the most recent report because it is a matter for the committee to deliberate upon, decide whether the report is right or wrong and what kind of action should be taken. To prejudge that report is to prejudge Parliament itself. The whole, basic argument is that we want to uphold this institution of Parliament. Surely we can all agree that the report should be dealt with by Parliament in the way in which Parliament decides to deal with it, rather than all of us shooting from the hip and trying to make political mileage out of a subject that has not been adequately discussed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cafik: In summary, I conclude by saying, first, if there is not enough scrutiny of public expenditure, it is because the opposition has not used diligently enough the time that has been given for that very important and essential job. I leave it to the voters to deal with them accordingly. Second, if there is waste of government expenditures, then I for one—and I am sure all members

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of the House—would want to see it stopped. But let us ascertain the facts before we make judgments. Third, let us look at last year's report of the Auditor General, which we have not yet done, before we start making judgments on this year's report; and let us allow parliament to study it in the institution we set up to do that, namely, the public accounts committee.

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's interjections while the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) was speaking, and I listened to his speech. I must say that his concluding remarks are an example of the reason this motion was moved by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). Also, it is the reason the Auditor General indicated in his final report to the House of Commons and to the country just why he is so concerned about Parliament and the fact that this government has done everything in its power to prevent the country from knowing the facts regarding the operation of the business of this country. I believe that is why the hon. member for Peace River has spoken so often about the operations of the government, the secrecy of the government and its divisive means of hiding the facts from the public almost continuously since 1968.

I think the hon. member for Peace River is justified in taking the kind of action he has taken over and over again because the people of this country said on October 30, 1972, that this government does not deserve a majority of seats in the House of Commons. Indeed, the people of Canada came very close to saying that it does not deserve to be the government of this country because of the ways and means it has devised to try to hide its actions from the public.

We, as the opposition, were certainly justified by the vote on October 30 in taking the type of action we took prior to that date, and the type of action we have taken since then to try to make Parliament the institution it once was, and no longer is because of the devious methods used by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) and the government as a whole to try to hide from the public the facts about the government's wastefulness in spending the taxpayers' money. What this government has been doing is nothing short of a national scandal. They sit like a bunch of satraps, spending the taxpayers' money as if they could not care less. I think one has to conclude that they could not care less about how they spend the taxpayers' money.

They wrap around themselves, apparently to try to keep away the criticism that has been mounting in the nation regarding the way they operate the country, a clique that has become almost alarming, of executive assistants of various sizes, shapes and forms to tell them what they want to hear and not to let the country tell them what the public thinks. We discovered in the last general election campaign that the people of this country were trying to get the message across to the government that they did not like the way they were running this country and they would have little or no opportunity to run the country any longer, especially after the next general election.

I believe one of the things that must be done quickly to eliminate the bureaucratic morass that has been developed by this government is to solve the problem of the tremen-