

having complained from one point of view I might complain from another point of view, and that is that I believe this was an attempt by the government to pull the rug out from under the hardworking public servants in the Auditor General's department who, as a result of their devotion to duty, and as a result of the devotion and expertise of the Auditor General himself, have exposed this government for what it is, a wasteful, arrogant, sagging carcass of a government so far as restraint or anything else is concerned.

In opening my speech I want to commend the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) on his very forceful reply to the statement of the President of the Treasury Board, and to congratulate other colleagues in this caucus who have spotlighted examples of the government's inability even to follow the law which has been laid down precisely and openly in regard to some responsibility for government expenditure.

If Bill C-19 is juxtaposed with the minister's statement today, and at the same time juxtaposed with a complete lack of responsibility with respect to restraint, as we have had exhibited through the good offices of the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Cossitt) who brought to the attention of the House the wasteful and flagrant abuse of public moneys by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang), I think we have a very interesting combination of events indeed.

This bill, which is supposed to deal with government restraint, is one of the most hypocritical pieces of cosmetic legislation that we have had to deal with in this House in my time here, and my time has not been as long as some others who will also deal with this bill. I remember the headlines when the predecessor bill was introduced which highlighted the intention to do away with Information Canada and the Company of Young Canadians. Those headlines only dealt with the surface of the cosmetic quality of this bill.

This bill is not by any means a restraint bill. In terms of the "at and east" rates in the field of transportation, which have been much discussed in this debate, the bill would do away with \$11 million worth of expenditure. The government, through another means—a sort of self-defeating means—is going to replace this money with \$9 million. In terms of a real lessening of government expenditure, we have the fact that the bill deals with the dismemberment and fundamental changing of research and development incentives aspects of government policy, which in the long run are perhaps so needed in this country that the point is hardly worthy of emphasis.

● (1640)

In the name of restraint, this government freezes the 1976 indexing fact of family allowances, in effect laying the burden of its restraint program, to the extent of \$230 million, on the backs of those people who rely on family allowances. It is a fact that there was a large increase in family allowances in dollar terms some time ago, but there was a fundamental change made at that time. For the first time those allowances became taxable, and in fact what happened is that those who do not need the benefit have had the increase virtually taxed away, but those who require the increase in benefits have had

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that frozen at a time when, despite the propaganda of this government, the expenditures for a man and woman trying to raise a family are increasing. This is double hypocrisy.

The greatest hypocrisy of all occurred in this House when the Minister of Transport stood in his place and talked about restraint. The hon. member for Fort William (Mr. McRae) was on his feet the other day when asked to explain in specific terms the so-called restraint exhibited by the Minister of Transport, and he took great pains to avoid the issue; and so he should, because as an example of irresponsibility on the part of a minister of the Crown dealing with public money, the case of the Minister of Transport and his Jet Star must be the cornerstone of hypocrisy.

I have come to the conclusion from what I have read in that noble newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*, that things may have been even worse, because apparently when the minister was caught with his finger in the public cookie jar, the next trip to his constituency was by Air Canada, the people's airline. The minister went out there, I guess with his press secretary. There was a picture of the minister and this girl named Adrienne Lang, his unpaid press secretary. The caption under the picture indicated that the minister was for the first time travelling by the people's airline, suffering the so-called discomfort and the degradation of having to travel in that way, leaving his flying machine at home. He travelled on one of those machines usually left to others of lesser estate and breed in this country. I do not know what that trip cost, but I assume it would be around \$274, a far cry from the cost of that trip involving the Grey Cup, amounting to \$10,222.

**An hon. Member:** It didn't cost him that; he has a pass.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** That would be the cost if he had to pay but, as the hon. member has pointed out, the minister has a pass. He should have a pass, and I would not argue about that; but my contention is that he should use his pass because that is why it was given him. In any event, the press secretary apparently said something to the press, because in the caption there was an indication that if there were offenders against the public purse in the ministry, the present Minister of Transport would be among the least of those offenders.

The hon. member for Leeds, who knows something about that of which he speaks because of his former associations, is placing on the order paper some additional questions to determine whether those words of the press secretary to the Minister of Transport were correct, and to ascertain whether in fact there has been even more wallowing in the public trough by others than has been exhibited by the Minister of Transport.

I find it difficult to accept what the minister has said in the House of Commons about his \$740,000 air travel bill for taking himself across the country, even to such a distinguished city as Saskatoon, all for the purpose of public business. I would not suggest the minister misled the House directly when he stood in his place and said that. I would suggest, however, that the minister and this government have become so arro-