

manner. It should be given the power to initiate investigations on its own, and given the necessary legal, technical and financial staff to properly conduct its task. All reports of Crown corporations should automatically be referred to that joint committee, and any corporation could be called before the committee at its discretion. We should have either this committee or a royal commission to examine all Crown corporations in order to determine if they are still fulfilling a useful purpose and if, in fact, many have not outlived their usefulness and have become redundant. We know that Crown corporations are created by the stroke of a pen. Many times they are created to serve a distinct purpose. However, after they have fulfilled that purpose they continue to exist. There is good reason to have a thorough examination of the numerous Crown corporations in existence.

Fourth, as I said earlier, we must work toward restoring the supremacy of parliament by overhauling the committee system, strengthening our committees, giving them more power, more resources and the power to initiate action. Moreover, this government must become more liberal with the information that it provides to parliament and the public of Canada. As a starter, the government should introduce a freedom of information act along the lines advocated by my colleague, the hon. member for Peace River. We in this country are facing a confidence crisis in our institutions and parliament. There is a growing wave of cynicism in this country. People believe our parliamentary institutions, parliament and governments, do not listen. The government is not held accountable to the people. Crown corporations are not held accountable. There is a void of information. Surely this is one area where public confidence could be improved by providing a greater amount of information on how the people's money is being spent and whether, in fact, it is being spent wisely or foolishly. Government and parliament must regain control over public spending in this country. The public service must be rewarded for efficiency rather than empire building. We must work toward containing the growth of the public service. What is really happening in this country, as it has happened in other western industrialized countries, is that we are living in a society where we have a growing number of non-producers and a lessening number of producers.

In conclusion, it is with some regret that we do not have a total package before us which would clean up the mess of government mismanagement and lack of government control. I can only hope, on behalf of all Canadians and especially those who contribute so much of their hard-earned money to the government in taxes, that the new powers bestowed upon the auditor general will be used to shake this government into action. Only if he takes the offensive can these new powers, and Bill C-20, be seen as worth while and justified. Only then can the auditor general be really fulfilling his mandate to protect the taxpayers of Canada.

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief. I must say, in reference to the remarks of the last speaker, that I am far less concerned about the committee system as it is constituted than I am about the ineffectiveness

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of the opposition in these committees. The official opposition has its research bureau paid for by public funds. It surely is incumbent on the members of the opposition to decide for what purposes they use the resources available to them.

The discussions in committee on Bill C-20 have been most interesting and, for the most part, non-partisan. Amendments to improve and strengthen the bill were discussed and many have now been incorporated, including suggestions put forward by members of the opposition parties. Amendments that were not accepted are, in some instances, to be considered in changes which are proposed to other pieces of legislation. One of the amendments voted down earlier today is in this category. I concentrated my attention on that section of the bill which deals with economy and efficiency in the public service and the various government agencies; also on the effectiveness of the programs. I want to make reference to that section at this time.

In the bill one can read that each report of the auditor general shall call attention to anything that he considers to be of significance and which should be brought to the attention of the House of Commons. These include any cases in which he has observed that money has been expended without due regard to economy or efficiency, or satisfactory procedures have not been established to measure and report upon the effectiveness of programs. The specific subsections are intended to implement that part of the recommendations of the independent review committee proposing that the auditor general should, in his annual report to the House of Commons, call attention to any cases where he has observed that value for money has not been obtained for any expenditure or expenditures.

The committee described its "value for money" concept when it indicated that the concept encompasses three inter-related components: whether the money is expended economically and efficiently, and whether the program on which it is expended is effective in meeting its objectives. Economy and efficiency are susceptible to reasonably objective definition and measurement, and the auditor general should take due account of them in conducting his examination of expenditures. However, the assessment of the effectiveness of a program or policy depends upon the political judgment of parliament and the confidence that parliament has in the government of the day. The auditor general is required to report to the House of Commons when he observes that satisfactory procedures have not been established to measure and report upon the effectiveness of programs where such procedures could appropriately and reasonably be implemented.

The bill places no restriction on the auditor general's right to assess the various procedures used in government to ensure economy and to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of programs. The auditor general would report to the House on poor procedures and on the government's failure to implement satisfactory procedures where they could reasonably be expected to be applied. An assessment of the procedures should include an assessment of the adequacy of the reporting of the