

Supply

much more apt to raise revenues through taxes than to reduce their extravagant expenditures and waste.

We, the Bloc, will allow, with this motion, every member to keep this promise. It is up to you to decide.

The Minister of Finance prefers to travel throughout the country at the taxpayer's expense to hold other consultations. I do not think these little trips will solve anything.

The minister should sit down with us and all the other parties in this House and look carefully at the true financial mess our great country is now in. I am sure that everybody here would agree to such a serious and open process. Nobody in this House can support ridiculous or useless spending.

• (1145)

Nobody can condone waste and deadwood. In the end, this process aims at ensuring that every tax dollar is spent efficiently.

As social housing critic, I have to look at the activities and programs of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Note that Quebec also has its own housing corporation, that is, the Société d'habitation du Québec. The work of these two similar corporations is similar and sometimes complementary. Both organizations deal with housing.

There is certainly some duplication of services that is very costly in terms of the number of employees doing similar tasks at both levels of government. These sums are possibly included in the operating budgets of the various programs under their authority. And let us not forget the incredible number of interdepartmental meetings required in order to harmonize the programs and all the co-ordination meetings between officials working on various projects.

Since there are federal-provincial agreements in each of the provinces, we can multiply by ten, plus two for the territories, this type of duplication of services that is very costly for the taxpayers and very confusing for the general public. Each level of government has its standards, its inspectors, its codes and its regulations. There is a cost attached to all that. We must simplify the system and concentrate all these activities at the same administrative level in order to meet needs more efficiently and to maximize the use of the money allocated for these programs.

Obviously, in Quebec, the Société d'habitation du Québec must be the only administrative authority in this area. The other provinces should do the same. That is up to them.

Right now, in Canada, in this rich and developed country, 1.2 million people are in desperate need of housing. The total withdrawal of the federal government as of January 1, 1994 is indecent and unacceptable. Moreover, the general agreements with the provinces are melting away like the snow because of deep cuts in federal funding. So, all of a sudden, the provinces/

find themselves without funding and it is the poorest in our society who suffer the terrible consequences.

Liberals do not seem to be doing anything to rectify the situation. They say that there is not enough money. Here is a golden opportunity for the government opposite to find considerable amounts of money in order to meet the housing needs of disadvantaged Canadians. But, a word of caution, the money taken from the various departments will have to be redistributed under new criteria. Federal standards must meet the particular needs of individual provinces and reflect their reality.

Quebec wants its fair share of funding for social housing, which has not been the case in the past few years.

Finally, let us administer our country intelligently and openly so that we have the means to meet the needs of the people, some of which are urgent.

[English]

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit hard to believe some of the things we are hearing in the House today in this debate. We heard the member for Yorkton—Melville earlier complain that his constituents were not invited to comment on the budgetary process, the most open one ever held in the country.

I would remind all members of the House that we are members of Parliament and we have an opportunity and a responsibility to consult with our constituents. We did that in my riding of London—Middlesex in collaboration with my other two colleagues in London. We held a pre-budget meeting and heard the concerns of our constituents. I would remind members of Parliament that as talented as he is the finance minister cannot be all places at the same time.

The member for Laurentides castigated the past government for its financial excesses and I would certainly agree with her. I would note that the leader of her party was a cabinet minister in that past government. Perhaps he could rationalize that past performance for her.

I quite frankly doubt very much that I could support the Bloc motion. Where specifically do the terms of reference for the public accounts committee, of which I am a member and which meets for the first time today, fall short in what the Bloc seeks to achieve by its motion?

• (1150)

If I can have explained some of the shortcoming in these terms of reference then perhaps I might be persuaded to support the motion.

As has already been noted, it will be interesting whether the Bloc takes up its opportunity today to have the chair of that committee be one of its own members. I am unconvinced at this moment. I am flabbergasted by some of the remarks I have heard