

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

COMMENTS ON GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The report of the Auditor General points out that the Government is guilty of wasting millions of taxpayers' dollars and of gross mismanagement, to such an extent that 30 per cent of the public servants do not know what they are supposed to be doing. The underlying essence of the Report is that we are experiencing a large scale Government scam, and "scam", in my view, is an acronym for "squander, contort and mismanage".

Does the Minister agree that this Report is a fairly accurate assessment, or is it his opinion that his Government is responsible, accountable, not wasteful, and provides sound management?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I do not think the Hon. Member has accurately described what the Auditor General said with respect to performance criteria and their communication within the Government. He said that 30 per cent of the employees surveyed throughout only seven Departments indicated that they were "unclear about the kind of job performance expected of them during the last rating period".

Mr. Beatty: How about the cabinet?

Mr. Gray: The Auditor General did not say that 30 per cent of the employees do not know what they are doing.

Mr. Clark: Do you know what you are doing?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gray: In any event, Madam Speaker, I want to assure the House that we are working with the Departments to update and review the—

Mr. Clark: Is it true that you have resigned?

Mr. Gray:—performance review system in question—

Mr. Clark: Herb, are you on strike?

Mr. Gray:—in the light of the Auditor General's recommendations. However, if the Hon. Member wants me to go on and respond more specifically, I would point out to him that the Auditor General pointed out in his Report that he has, "identified a gradual but unmistakable emergence of a new determination in Government and Parliament toward improved management and more stringent accountability". The Auditor General's Report itself indicates that the Hon. Member does not know what he is talking about.

Oral Questions

Mr. Stewart: I would like to tell the Minister that that was a gray answer from a gray area.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McDermid: No gray matter.

FOREIGN AID—RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IN HAITI

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Let me ask the Minister why, in view of what he just said, he does not read the Report a little further. If he did he would see that in November, 1981, after \$22 million of taxpayers' money was spent over a period of ten years, a project in Haiti was cancelled by gross mismanagement. A subsequent audit revealed that a \$110,000 payment was fraudulently paid, that a \$127,000 payment was paid and it was suspected of being fraudulent, and \$1.7 million—

Madam Speaker: Order, order!

Mr. Stewart:—of Canadian taxpayers' money is not accounted for.

Madam Speaker: Order. I do not know why we have so much trouble on Wednesdays in keeping questions short, but all of the questions have been too long and, most of all, the answers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: Madam Speaker, with all due regard for the Chair, I do not know why you always pick on me.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stewart: May I ask my supplementary question?

Madam Speaker: I would tell the Hon. Member that once in a while I have to pick on someone. It just turns out that it is him today.

Mr. Stewart: May I ask the Minister a question, Madam Speaker? Will the Minister acquiesce that gross mismanagement was involved in the Haiti project? Will he tell us, this House, that he will name persons responsible for this gross mismanagement, and will there be firings?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, the Auditor General has identified a number of important issues. With respect to the one the Hon. Member has mentioned, I intend to be discussing this matter very thoroughly with the Minister responsible for CIDA so that all appropriate action will be taken.

I might add that the Hon. Member would ask better questions if he had more gray matter, which he obviously lacks.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!