

*Private Members' Business*

When you look at the size of the government machine, which is massive, it seems to me that, when there is a problem, it is absolutely essential to be aware of it as soon as possible and take corrective measures, so that we can still meet our objectives. This is in keeping with other objectives set by the Liberal Party of Canada which wants government's operations to be much more open than in previous years. We want to improve our cost-effectiveness.

[English]

This bill at least in principle, and one might want to quibble with the niceties and the details and what have you which I will leave to parliamentarians to do, not only reaches a prime objective of providing information when we need it so that we can take corrective action, but permits us to conduct a more open and more transparent type of government which is one of the goals of this party and this government and to improve our accountability. For me that is of critical importance.

It is important, certainly for me, that the Auditor General play a critical role in the efficient management of government. Obviously it is not the Auditor General himself with his team but certainly the Auditor General and that team are major players working with government in trying to make it more efficient and trying to make absolutely certain that we spend taxpayers' money as wisely as we can.

I applaud not only this Auditor General but Auditor Generals in the past for their efforts in that area.

Just the other day in the operations committee, a statutory committee of the House of Commons of which I am a member, I chatted with the Auditor General and his team about a number of important concepts such as *Renouveau 2000*, of how we can in fact determine criteria for success when we look at the civil service and the operations of government, what measures other governments have undertaken to establish that and how we compare with other governments. We are going to have additional discussions.

I want to underline the main point which is that the Auditor General, with the team available and the tools that are there, can help this government, its ministers, the members of Parliament of this government and whatever party to understand government better, to come forth with creative solutions to the problems we have and to put forth mechanisms that are going to help us reach the objectives that we think are valid for all Canadians.

● (1415)

While the Auditor General is obviously a critical component of government and has an important role to play, I want to remind members that we have many other sources of information.

Personally I feel as a member of Parliament that the greatest benefit I have which is never mentioned is all the sources of information at my disposal. Unfortunately the one thing I do not have is the time to read all those sources of information. There are many and excellent.

Let me mention just a few. For example, the Commissioner of Official Languages brings forward a report that is insightful and potentially very helpful, whatever our position happens to be on official languages. I think mine is fairly well known.

There is a report as well from the Human Rights Commission which is extremely useful and insightful that I would recommend to all parliamentarians. There are reports from the Public Service Commission. Again they have much useful information.

Some will know that many valuable reports on a wide range of public policy and management issues from Canadian and non-Canadian institutions are available to parliamentarians through the Library of Parliament. We must never forget the Library of Parliament is there to make those available to us.

There are reports from the private sector think tanks or from international bodies such as the OECD while others are the works of academics, business, labour, professionals, associations or other interest groups. These are useful tools to inform us, to help us get to know government, our country better, to help us understand what the goals of a government might be and how we might reach those objectives.

I want to say at this point how much I appreciate the contribution of the Library of Parliament itself. I have seldom found an institution that is as responsive as it has been to my needs. I use it a lot. It responds with a great deal of sensitivity. It responds rapidly and with excellent information that I have learned that I can trust. There are very few instances where I have not been very satisfied at the response to my request. I want to applaud all the men and women who work very hard for all of us.

I want to mention another source of information that perhaps is overlooked on occasion. The Government of Canada has established from time to time royal commissions, various task forces to study in depth and report on issues which are important to the public policy agenda.

Another source that is often forgotten is the Senate of Canada. It often produces superb reports that are extremely useful. For those members who have never had an opportunity to read them, I would suggest that they do so. In fact, if they did I warn them, and I can see the facial expressions of certain colleagues, their view of the Senate and senators might change. If members do not want their view of the Senate and senators to change then perhaps they should not read them. If members are interested in accurate information and insightful commentary I suggest that