

*Supply*

Earlier we referred briefly to infrastructures. I think that the \$2 billion infrastructure program of the Liberal government is insufficient, since the Federation of Canadian Municipalities suggested a \$15 billion investment.

My question is: Is it the politicians who spend too much, not knowing where they are headed, or is it the civil servants who mismanage programs?

I will conclude by saying to the Reform Party that the situation is much worse than that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I apologize for interrupting the hon. member for Charlevoix, but I have to remind all members that, as their representative, I must ensure that they comply with the Standing Orders of this House.

I am aware that five minutes for questions and comments is a very short period. However, comments must be brief in order to allow the member who makes a speech to provide a reply or an answer to a question.

[*English*]

In that spirit I would ask the member for Yorkton—Melville if he would like to make a concluding remark or comment.

**Mr. Breitreuz (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I have taken to heart what has been said. I will try to be brief.

I feel it is very important that we sit down together and discuss these things, as my colleague from the Bloc has said. We need to do this in an atmosphere that our standing committees are conducive toward. We have these committees in place. They have a mandate to review the programs. I am on the Standing Committee for Human Resources Development and we are looking at a budget of \$68 billion. Right there, if we are going to restructure that, there is a tremendous opportunity to do the things suggested here and those are to review social programs and look at ways in which spending can be reduced.

We have all these standing committees in place already. I do not think we are going to solve our problems in government by bringing in more government. That contributes to the problem we already have. We need to reward people for finding ways to do with less, to downsize government and consequently spend less. That is the aim that we must have. We must never lose sight of that as we work on our individual standing committees.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate today. I hope that our arguments will help enlighten hon. members about the merits of our motion. What we are proposing is a simple and realistic

process that no member in this House can off-handedly reject simply because it was not put forward by his or her party.

Our constituents expect such action from us. I do not see how I could go back to my riding this weekend and try to explain why we refused to examine public finances. Such a refusal would show a lack of respect for our voters and an attempt to shirk our responsibilities. We as members of the Bloc Québécois have received an additional mandate, and a significant one at that.

Quebecers have especially asked us to protect their interests and to focus our energy and efforts to help Quebec attain its sovereignty. Soon Quebecers will democratically determine their own future.

For more than three months now, each and everyone of us has noticed, day in and day out, that our federal system has some major flaws on several levels, especially from an administrative and a political point of view. On the one hand, the Auditor General has always loudly complained about the mismanagement of government funds.

On the other hand, provinces claim that they have been treated unfairly, because of unjust decisions based on so-called national standards, which obviously are not making provincial authorities very happy. Add to this the willingness of hon. members to play a bigger part in the decision and legislative system, and you can say without a doubt that our system is not efficient and needs some major changes.

Take, for instance, the Auditor General of Canada who publishes every year horror stories like some of Stephen King bestsellers on the way our government manages this country. The Auditor General cannot all by himself go through everything. He focuses on some very well defined areas. He examines only some of the elements of public administration. He is asked to perform a monumental task requiring detailed knowledge of the situation. Recently we heard some horror stories about senators, but let us not dwell on that.

The evaluation process used by the Auditor clearly shows the scope and the complexity of the federal administration. It is becoming more and more difficult, if not utterly impossible, to control this monster and the vast number of programs involving extraordinary public spending.

Our approach or proposal is a symbolical and responsible attempt to democratize and open the whole issue of public finances. The people will better understand public expenditures and will be in a better position to evaluate the government's decisions.

Year after year, successive ministers of Finance pledge to apply stricter controls, to eliminate waste and to reduce spending. Alas, results are always disappointing. Governments are