

Auditor General Act

costs, the return to their owners, shareholders, or what have you.

The amount that this government has been overspending and the extent to which it has been increasing the money supply is absolutely stragging. Any taxpayer who might be listening or who would care to read these remarks will be astounded, because the amount of borrowing which we have just recently approved, \$14 billion, which is to cover the current monetary needs of the government's operations, is equal to the total amount of all personal income taxes paid by taxpayers in Canada in 1978. In 1978 there were 14 million taxpayers who filed returns in Canada. Including those who had losses and no tax payable, on average \$1,000 per person was paid in income tax, for a total of \$14.2 billion. This year the government has asked Parliament to approve the borrowing of \$14 billion just to cover overspending in one year. Because of this continuing policy which has aggravated the economic situation and led to inflation, we have a situation where the total debt of Canada is probably unknown precisely, but is certainly over \$100 billion now.

With the government having to pay the interest rates that it, like everyone else, has to pay, in the current estimates for the 1981-1982 fiscal period there is provision for over \$12 billion just to pay interest on the outstanding debt. That is a figure approaching the total of all personal income taxes paid by taxpayers in 1978. That figure, because it is in the estimates, ignores the interest burden shouldered by all the Crown corporations. Unless one is a wizard or whatever, those figures are an unknown quantity. However, they would certainly put the total up to the \$14 billion range. So one can see where the comparison lies.

Granted, these highly paid executives of ours, servants of Parliament, civil servants and so on, need this money; but then the average man on the street also needs raises. That is why we have a lot of labour strife, and pensions conferences to find out why people cannot afford to pay these high prices.

We once had a debate respecting the salary of a certain minister opposite who had retired to his home in Vancouver. We discussed the indexed pension he would receive as a former minister of the Crown, and we found that he would have an enormous pension if he lived to be 75. Based on projections that were made at that time—that was a few years ago—this retired minister would need all of that money because when he was 75 years old he would have to pay \$60,000 to buy a Ford car and \$7 for a loaf of bread. If he wanted to get the plumbing fixed or something, and if he would have to employ a plumber, it would cost him \$250 to get the kitchen sink drain repaired.

We are a few years along that road now. Who would have thought a few years ago that we would now be at the age of the \$10,000 Volkswagen? In fact, I think it probably costs a lot more than that, but \$10,000 is about the minimum cost of a Volkswagen. If one wanted to buy a Mercedes-Benz, one would have to pay about \$55,000.

Mr. Kempling: If you can't afford it, don't ask the price.

Mr. Clarke: The day of the \$100,000 Rolls-Royce is gone. We are already pretty close to the \$1 loaf of bread. I guess,

with the rates that plumbers and other trades people need to charge these days, we are well along the road to the \$250 visit from the plumber.

We have agreed to have a fairly limited debate on this bill, so I do not think I need detain the House any longer. However, it is absolutely essential when considering simple little bills like this with two clauses which have a great impact on a couple of Canadians, that we look beyond the two clauses to see why it is necessary to fix the salaries of a servant of Parliament. I suggest the whole structure of our monetary system is in jeopardy because of the policies that this government opposite has been following for at least the last 13 years, maybe longer than that. If we say that often enough in the House and outside the House, I just hope we can convince the government opposite that the policies it is pursuing are an absolute disaster and mean ruin for our pensions system, for our monetary system and probably for the whole fabric of our society. We very much want hon. members opposite to learn the consequences of their deeds before it is too late.

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the New Democratic Party. As Treasury Board critic for our party and as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I deal fairly closely with the Auditor General and we have had several occasions to deal with the Auditor General's office over the life of this Parliament so far. I would like to take this opportunity, before saying anything about Bill C-64 itself, to congratulate Mr. Kenneth Dye, the new Auditor General, who will be acting as an officer of this Parliament to keep control over the purse strings, over the spending presented by the government, authorized by Parliament, and then disbursed in the proper manner. I think he performs an important role in our society by being the watch dog over or guardian of the purse strings of this country.

I would like to say that we favour speedy passage of this bill whereby the Auditor General of Canada would move from a classification comparable to a Chief Justice of the Federal Court to a puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Canada. As the hon. member who spoke just previously to me pointed out, the salary range for the Auditor General of Canada will now be in the range of \$80,000 to \$90,000 per year. I recognize this is a high salary, but I have been assured by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that we will be discussing the subject of high salaries when we review the salaries of Members of Parliament. This matter will be coming before us in the near future so I will not dwell on it now.

● (1240)

A salary range of \$80,000 to \$90,000 a year reflects the importance of the position of Auditor General of Canada. I am certain that Mr. Kenneth Dye and his predecessor, Mr. J. J. Macdonell, could have earned that type of salary in the private sector as professionals. I should like to say, Mr. Speaker, that we favour speedy passage of Bill C-64.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!