

Waste and Mismanagement

The government is now in possession of an initial copy of the Lambert commission report. The commission has reported and the copies are being printed and should be made public in a few days. If they are not made public, it is because the government does not want the public to know the recommendations which the Lambert commission made.

The commission recommends changes in the way that cabinets and deputy ministers are appointed and moved around. It is recommending changes in the manner in which this government is organized. It is recommending an enhancing and an upgrading of the role of parliament to ensure that the people's representatives can find out what the government is doing as well as exercising authority over it. It is recommending changes in Crown corporations and the way in which they are handled. It is recommending changes in the Treasury Board and in other central agencies of the government. In essence, what the Lambert commission is doing is making recommendations for very widespread changes in the manner in which this government has been operating. In making these recommendations the Lambert commission is stating implicitly that at present the government is maladministered and grossly mismanaged.

Lest hon. members on the other side get the wrong impression—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired. Nevertheless, he may continue with unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: Five minutes.

Mr. Andre: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank members of the House. I will take two more minutes. I did not want to give the impression that I am in receipt of an advance copy of the Lambert commission report because I am not, but I do have a general inkling of what it contains. Indeed, one can get that message from the interim report. If I look forward with anticipation to the report of the Lambert commission, it is because it will be recommending precisely what my party has been recommending for quite a period of time.

● (1540)

If there is any doubt about that, I would refer hon. members to the debate which took place in February of 1978 when we allotted an opposition day to this subject. We laid out in specific detail the necessary changes to restore democratic control in the government's spending processes and to ensure that proper management and effective control of taxpayers' money is the rule rather than the exception.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, the government administers taxpayers' money in trust. A position of trust demands the utmost in care, efficiency and effectiveness, and that the money be spent in accordance with the wishes of the democratically elected representatives of the people. The government has failed to honour this trust. It has failed miserably,

[Mr. Andre.]

and in the process it has wasted enormous amounts of money, and perhaps even more seriously, it has wasted ten or 11 years which could have been put to better use.

Basically the Lambert commission is recommending that everything the Prime Minister has done in regard to managing the affairs of Canada be changed. That verifies our view that this is the most poorly managed government in Canada's history. I urge the House to support this motion so that Canadians will get their long overdue opportunity to express their opinion.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I commend the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) for introducing this motion before the House today. Let me indicate at the outset that we intend to support it.

I should like to comment on approximately three or four matters. First, I will give some evidence of government mismanagement and waste. I will make a few comments in general about government spending and the practices of various governments across the country. Also I should like to comment a little on the entire area of corporate waste, which we sometimes forget about.

A portion of the motion reads "to implement management and administrative procedures that will ensure that the taxpayers' funds are spent efficiently". The hon. member for Calgary Centre referred to Crown corporations and the fact that there are approximately 400 of them in the country. Also he referred to the lack of authority parliament has over them. Perhaps a solution which should be thought about by parliament is the one which was introduced by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) when he was premier of Saskatchewan a long time ago. At that time they struck in the legislature a committee on Crown corporations. Part of the practice of the legislative assembly in Saskatchewan is that an annual report of every Crown corporation is referred to the appropriate committee before the house recesses or before the house closes for the year. In that way members of the legislative assembly have a direct input into what Crown corporations are saying and doing. For at least the commercial Crown corporations, such as Petro-Canada, Air Canada, AECL and various other ones, perhaps this procedure should be implemented into the rules and regulations of this House. Regardless of party or regardless of government, it would give all of us a chance to give some input to the directions and priorities of Crown corporations.

In terms of the entire area of waste, there is a lot of evidence concerning government waste and mismanagement. All one has to do is look at several Auditor General reports. They show the whole litany of bad decisions, waste and mismanagement listed year in and year out. One can look at examples in the city of Ottawa where federal government buildings are sitting empty. I am glad the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Buchanan) will be replying. Perhaps he can comment on this area as well.

I have before me a copy of an article which appeared in the February 24, 1979, edition of the *Ottawa Journal*. It is