

this government wants to persuade the people of Canada that it finally wishes to exercise restraint, it will take the initiative by providing ways and means by which control can be exercised. My hon. friend from Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) has been questioning members of the treasury bench for some time with these things in mind. The reaction has not been very favourable, and if the reaction to my proposals is the same as it has been to his questions, I do not think much notice will be taken of them.

There is one other suggestion I would make. It is that we find some means whereby, when the government is introducing legislation or planning programs of any kind, it is compelled to make known to the House precisely what expenditure is involved. If the government reintroduces, for example, a bill varying the unemployment insurance benefits, or dealing with immigration, no such legislation should be considered unless it contains a clause setting out the probable cost. Such open disclosure would have a salutary, wholesome effect in restraining government expenditure.

We forget, now, how much we were told 25 years ago what the St. Lawrence Seaway would cost. Were we ever told the probable cost of the medical and hospital insurance schemes, both of them intrinsically useful proposals? We were never told the truth about what they would cost. It might well be that had we known what those costs would be, restraints would have been placed upon the degree to which they were implemented. It is this failure on the part of the government to be honest and truthful in connection with public expenditure which has made the public so unwilling to accept half-measures such as those now before us.

I submit that my proposition makes sense. If you or I, Mr. Speaker, decide to write a letter to one of our constituents, we know that such a letter might very well be published and we are careful to state the facts as they are. I feel the government should be compelled to follow a similar course when it comes to legislation and new projects. Take, for example, Bill C-20, the next bill on the order paper, the bill concerning the Auditor General. This is a bill of which I am very much in favour and it is one to which a price-tag could be attached. It is my strong belief that in order to persuade the public that the government means what it says, more truth must be conveyed to them with regard to programs of expenditure.

I offer those two suggestions to government and government members and, in conclusion, I say to them that if Bill C-19 is the only answer the government has to the refusal of the public to accept its sincerity when it comes to the question of restraint in government spending, they have lost the case before it has even come to court.

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a brief comment on the complaint of my hon. friend from Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) that government estimates are not spelled out clearly. This is a matter which has been of concern to me since my arrival in this House four years ago. I have often wondered why the government did not issue a true budget. Maybe it should be 50, 60 or 70 pages long, with the various programs, the number of man-years in

Restraint of Government Expenditures

each program, the number of personnel and the expenditure set out so that people could scrutinize closely each department and what they proposed to spend—much as they would do in the case of a corporation budget or even a family budget—so they might know what was planned. Then if more than was necessary was spent, they could zero in and find out exactly why that program was over budget. Indeed, if a program did not make use of all the funds allotted to it, the funds for the program could be trimmed in future years to what was actually needed. I have often felt this would not only help members of parliament in their scrutiny of government affairs, but would clear away secrecy by putting the figures in the books in an intelligible form so that most members of parliament would understand them in addition to the public.

Today we are discussing Bill C-19 which is part of the government's program of restraint. The government decided, on the day before Thanksgiving last year, 1975, that they had bungled the job, that they were going to swallow themselves and reverse their former position, introduce controls and at the same time exercise restraint in government spending. This bill is laughable if it is really going to deal with government restraint. It is a bill which is going to wipe out some provisions which cost some money, but it does not go to the core of the problem. The core of the problem is that the government embarks on programs and does not reassess older programs to see whether they should be continued or, in fact, discontinued. Last year we heard the government was going to cut out the CYC, the Opportunities for Youth program and cut down the LIP program. Then, of course, we heard in the Speech from the Throne and through the Minister of Manpower that they were going to introduce new programs which virtually would pick up the slack which they had originally cut out a year before in their so-called restraint program.

There is one aspect of this bill which greatly concerns me. I think it is a phony issue which the government has included in its restraint package. That is something that is false and misleading. The fact is that the government, through the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald), has stated on previous occasions that one of the best ways of increasing industrial productivity is to encourage development of high technology and innovative new processes. At that time the Minister of Finance went on to say that this was a high-risk business and a difficult one into which to attract venture capital. However, the minister promised to look at the problem and to do so on a priority basis, whatever that might mean. I suppose that means whenever a new government is formed to take over from the tired bones that are presently on the treasury benches.

● (1630)

Clause 10 of the bill would wipe out the Industrial Research and Development Incentives Act. This seems, to me, to be a retrograde step. On March 10 of this year the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce announced that after providing more than \$220 million in research and development funds to some 3,000 Canadian companies during the last nine years, the Industrial Research and Development Incentives Act, known as IRDIA, would come to an end this year. The fact is