

Government Spending

unskilled workers who will feel the brunt of unemployment in Canada. Tuesday's *Globe and Mail* quoted Dr. John Sheppard, Executive Director, Science Council of Canada, as saying:

People with Ph.D.'s in science are no strangers to unemployment and a federal anti-inflation program will make their job situation worse—

We are, therefore, in a typical boom and bust cycle which is unfair to the student, hideously wasteful to the taxpayer and damaging to our potential as a technology-based nation. There are at present about 1,700 surplus Ph.D.'s in Canada and the education of each has cost taxpayers \$50,000. It's time for industry, the federal Manpower Department and the universities to get together and begin planning for future job market needs.

It is time that the government and the progressive elements in the cabinet paid more than lip service to the word planning, making it a more meaningful project for all Canadians, especially those who live in the shadow of regional disparity from the beginning to the end of their lives. Indeed, this government on its spending policy and other policies needs to stop confusing the people and must begin to give us acceptable and competent management of our economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Joyal (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Madam Speaker, I am glad to take part in the debate and to go on with the debate on the basis on which the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse), the chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, has carried on with the debate this afternoon.

I should like to take this opportunity to point out the outstanding work he is doing as chairman of this committee which, as I will show later, has a very special place within our parliamentary system, and also the great tact, the cleverness, the spirit of neutrality and impartiality with which he presides over the destinies of this committee.

Indeed, since the start of the 30th Parliament, the committee has tabled three reports in the House, the fourth is now being revised and doubtless we will manage to discharge our responsibilities in the time allotted to us.

Still, Madam Speaker, I have a few remarks to make at this time which all parties may not find pleasing. Since I have had the opportunity of participating in the proceedings of the Committee on Public Accounts, I have noticed that one party in the House has never sent any of its members to its meetings. I am speaking of the Social Credit party of Canada. I regret it all the more as when we have debates such as those held today, those hon. members are often the most eager to rise and criticize the government on the way it manages its programs, on the fact that budgets are not high enough, and on the fact that there is a shameless waste of public funds.

It is very easy, Madam Speaker, on an opposition day, to come to the House and cry before the press and the public that the government spends too much on local initiatives projects, that its national defence programs are ill used, that it spends too much on office supplies. Now, when the Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates is sitting or when the Auditor General's report is tabled in the House, it so happens that those members are not attending. Even if we give them notice of those sittings, they never come to discuss spendings where decisions are really made.

[Mr. Hogan.]

I regret, Madam Speaker, to have to say that there is another party in the House which very rarely takes part in the proceedings of the public accounts committee. It is the New Democratic Party. I regret it all the more, because some members of this party are among those who attend the House most regularly, and who best know the procedure of Parliament. But why, when it comes to control government expenditures or to discuss the Auditor General's report, is this party not represented on the public accounts committee.

I think the first responsibility we have as members of Parliament is of course to be in the House on opposition days, but even more to be present in committees when decisions are made. This is the first remark I wanted to make, and I regret having to do it because I have always tried to place my speeches in this House on parameters of neutrality. I would not want my next remarks about the very nature of this Committee on Public Accounts to smack of partisanship. I think, Madam Speaker, that I had to report to the House that this committee suffers from poor attendance and that the political parties who delegate members to this committee should ensure that they have as many seats as are allowed under the rules.

The second remark I should like to make, Madam Speaker, concerns the politicization of the role of the Auditor General of Canada. Since Mr. James Macdonell was appointed Auditor General, we have witnessed a complete reversal in the attitude and the sense of responsibility of the Auditor General. His predecessor saw fit to taint his actions with political overtones in order to be efficient. The present Auditor, on the other hand, found it more effective to carry out his responsibilities in a more professional way, more consistent with the principles of public accounting than his predecessor.

Madam Speaker, when Mr. Macdonell was appointed Auditor General of Canada, his first task was to establish an independent committee to review the functions, powers and role of the Auditor General of Canada, and especially the way Parliament is carrying out its duty to control public spending. This committee sat and presented a report; members of parliament have had the opportunity to read it and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) informed us this afternoon that there is now a bill being drafted and that next session we would likely be able to discuss and adopt it. That is positive action. The minister did not limit himself to being guest speaker at dinners of social or philanthropic clubs across the country. I prefer an official who has the sense of responsibility and takes immediate action to improve the system. I do not believe it is necessary to limit oneself or that the Auditor General of Canada has a calling to attend every dinner conference across Canada to denounce government extravagances.

● (2130)

On taking office, the Auditor General of Canada realized that until 1962 when the Glassco Commission settled down to the task, there had never been a comprehensive review of the government's administration. He did not fuss about it, did not call at the Canadian Club or at the Rotary Club, he simply made the decision to contact the Public Service Commission Chairman and ask him if he would participate in the exchange program with private