

to bring about some meaningful discussion by members of parliament in the creation of this new office? I say no.

I have tried my best to point out the problems associated with this one paragraph bill. They are enormous and frightening, and the government should not proceed in this way. It is hiding, covering up, and dealing in secrecy, and it is not fair that the new Comptroller General should have to face such a lot, knowing that if this government had the necessary intestinal fortitude, it could have accepted the amendment which we introduced earlier. That would have given some indication of what the job is all about and what we can expect of the comptroller general.

Perhaps I am just whistling in the dark, because this is a callous government which does not really care. As long as there are enough hon. members opposite to vote us down, they are not interested in meaningful and responsible amendments or submissions. However, I never give up hope. I have been here ten years, and every now and again a chord can be struck. Some hon. members opposite are laughing at me, and that is very unfortunate.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** You are just getting started.

**Mr. Alexander:** It is necessary that we give leadership. In view of the way the government is spending, perhaps it does not want the comptroller general to have any clout or any teeth. As the bill stands, he will be toothless.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) that his allotted time has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent. Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to continue?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I will not take too much time. I just want to plead with the Parliamentary Secretary to President of Treasury Board (Mr. Lefebvre). He knows the position of the opposition. As a member of parliament he knows what we are attempting to do. He knows that there is some merit in our position. He knows we should be moving in the direction the opposition wants this government to move. I know he has a speech to make. I will not say it has been prepared by departmental officials, because that would not be fair.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** I have it my hand.

**Mr. Alexander:** Just because it is written in long hand does not mean that it has not been prepared by departmental officials. However, I do not want to get involved in that because I see that the parliamentary secretary is getting sensitive and touchy. I do not want him to get touchy because I want him to understand and to agree that I have an exceptionally good point. I and other hon. members have attempted to put this point before the House for the edification of the Canadian people. I hope that on second thought, after listening

to our cogent and important arguments, the government will accept our amendment. It would not have to accept it in its present form if there are technical difficulties with respect to drafting, but when the parliamentary secretary stands up, I hope he will move in that direction. If he does not do so, I will be extremely disappointed.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, if I say as much as the bill does, I will not talk for a long time: it will not take me more than two minutes to cover it all. Nevertheless I want to express my opinion about the principle of this bill under which the government would appoint a comptroller general.

The first time I read the title of the bill, even before I received a copy of it, I figured it would be quite a voluminous bill because I thought, and I still do, that the duties of the comptroller general would be of the utmost importance; I even consider they are more important than those of the auditor general because, in my mind, the auditor general's duty is to examine the administration of departments, to discover errors that have been made and to make parliament aware of these gaps, whereas I consider the comptroller general is more of a consultant, of a counsellor to the various departments and to the government. That is why the appointment of a comptroller general, as stated here, and I quote:

The purpose of this amendment is to establish the office of the Comptroller General of Canada and to provide for the assignment of duties and functions to the incumbent of that office.

Naturally, at first sight, nobody can be against the appointment of a comptroller general, but first we should know how the comptroller will be selected, what kind of man he will be. Will he be free in his actions or will he be bound to the policy of a party or that of a government? Mr. Speaker, this question always comes up in our parliamentary system. The bill says, and I quote:

● (1632)

The Governor in Council may appoint an officer called the Comptroller General . . .

Mr. Speaker, of course we would want an independent person, a person qualified to judge without prejudice the action and policies of the government, a person to be appointed by the minister or by the cabinet—in fact, this person will be appointed by the governor in council, that is by the cabinet. But are we to believe that they will select that person in the ranks of Progressive Conservative, NDP or Social Credit candidates? We all know the Liberals well enough not to expect them to do that, unless they pick someone from the Senate, but it is quite obvious that the people they send to the other place are no longer very useful.

Mr. Speaker, we know that election time is coming, some candidates will be defeated and every time I defeated lawyers in an election, they were appointed judges the next day. This is