

mechanism by which he reports in a very effective way directly to parliament.

I am sure that when hon. gentlemen and hon. ladies on the other side think about this matter they will realize that the pattern of the Auditor General Act cannot be repeated, that it would be a serious mistake to attempt to set out by statute duties which would involve a jurisdictional conflict, that an attempt to define the duties precisely would be self-defeating, and that the usual way by which the duties of a person of deputy minister rank are developed and described should be observed in this instance.

For this reason I will vote against the amendments, but I support the bill enthusiastically. I welcome it. I was delighted to have the opportunity to examine yesterday before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates the incumbent who has just been appointed to the position. I wish him well, I congratulate him on assuming these duties at what must be something of a financial sacrifice for him, and I am sure the people of Canada will have reason to be grateful.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dean Whiteway (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. I heard a comment from the other side to the effect that they want to have our two cents worth. Well, let me point out to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) that the Progressive Conservatives have already given the government our two cents worth, but I do not know whether the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) likes it over there. If they would get inflation under control, he might still be worth that much to them. If he is only worth half that much, it is only their fault.

We are debating tonight Bill C-10 to amend the Financial Administration Act. Before I get to the specific parts of the bill I want to pause for a minute to recognize the situation in which we find ourselves tonight on April 27. We recognized that back in November, 1976 the Auditor General pointed out in his report that the government had lost control of its spending and suggested that it was so serious that, if it continued, he would be unable to approve government accounts.

Why is it necessary for us to have a comptroller general? There are many reasons why we on this side see the necessity for such a position, why we will support this legislation and why my colleagues have submitted from this side some reasonable amendments based on sound judgment.

Let us look at the situation we have in Canada today as related to government spending. I would like to compare the figures of today with those of 1968 when this government came to power. Because it is the ten year legacy of spending by this government that caused the Auditor General, in November of 1976, to say that government spending is out of control.

When this government came to power in 1968 the rate of unemployment was 375,000; today it is 1,045,000. That is the official figure. The real figure is closer to 1,400,000. Ten years ago UIC benefits amounted to \$438 million; today they are

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\$4.5 billion. We are paying Canadians \$4.5 billion not to work, not to be productive. When this government came to office, the rate of inflation was 4.5 per cent; today, with the world champion wrestler who has wrestled inflation to the ground, the rate of inflation stands at 8.7 per cent, double what it was ten years ago. When this government came to office, the CPI was 89.4 per cent; today, ten years later, it is 168.9 per cent.

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When the government came into office, the trade balance was \$3.1 billion; today it is \$11.6 billion, which is four times greater. This is the legacy of spending which caused the Auditor General to say that government spending is out of control. When the government came into power, total spending was \$10.9 billion; in this fiscal year it will be \$41.1 billion, which is almost four times as much. If there was a reward for spending, the government would receive unquestionably the blue riband. The amount of money the government spent which it did not have or would not realize in revenues, at the time it came into office, was only \$800 million; today that deficit is \$9.2 billion. The government spends more today than what its total budget was when it came to power.

When the Trudeau government came into office, the budget of the Post Office was \$67.2 million; today that deficit is \$567 million. When the government came into power in 1968, the Post Office employed 36,000 people; today it employs 61,000 people. The number has doubled. If it doubles again, we will never get our mail. When the federal government came into power, there were 236,000 employees in the federal public service; today it has 331,000 employees.

One would think the increase in staff which has occurred in the office of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) would result in their at least straightening him out, but obviously that has not happened. When the Prime Minister came into office one decade ago, there were eight people on his staff. Today there are 90 people, which is an increase of 82. That is the legacy of spending I am referring to.

I could refer to more figures that would indicate the increase in government spending. We are happy to be able to debate tonight whether Canada will have the benefit of a comptroller general. The government does not seem to accept the urgency of such a position. Two years ago the Auditor General pointed out that government spending was out of control. It took a year and a half for the government to put the legislation in place. It was introduced on March 8. I should like to indicate just how serious the government was about the creation of this position. Was it the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) who moved and spoke on this bill? No, it was not; it was his parliamentary secretary. If this position is as important as the government indicates, and if it is as important as members of the official opposition know it is, why did it take so long to get the bill? The Auditor General made his recommendations in 1976. The bill was introduced on March 8. Today is April 27, and we are on the eve of a federal election. Why did the government bring in legislation of such