

comptroller general to acquire copies of the proceedings and evidence of the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, issues Nos. 7, 8 and 9, where all the answers were given in great detail in reply to the arguments put forth here today and previously.

Also, this morning—and this was mentioned by the hon. member for Edmonton West—Mr. Rogers himself, the new Comptroller General, appeared before the committee and once again answered in great detail questions which were put to him. Unfortunately, as the hon. member himself mentioned, because of the conflict of having to attend another committee, the hon. member was able to be present at the meeting of that committee for only a few minutes, although we did give him time to put forward his own philosophy, as he mentioned. Had he been able to attend the full committee hearing this morning, he would have found that Mr. Rogers feels in no way restricted and has studied the committee hearings, as he revealed in a direct answer to a question I myself asked him, and has also studied the 20 recommendations which were tabled in the committee on March 21. If the hon. member has not read them, I would commend them to him. They describe fully and in detail in 20 paragraphs the comptroller general's responsibilities and duties.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): They can be changed so easily.

Mr. Lefebvre: They were tabled on March 21. I do not know if the hon. member has been able to study them.

I do not intend to prolong this debate, Mr. Speaker. The Comptroller General is in effect on duty now. He started his work on April 1. He has come from the private sector with excellent recommendations and he has held any number of important positions before taking on his duties as comptroller general. We all know he has made a personal sacrifice in accepting this position. There is no doubt as to his capabilities, his integrity, or the way in which he has handled himself in his previous positions.

I think we should terminate this debate. The government has no intention of accepting this amendment. This has been stated before regarding similar amendments in the committee. I recommend that this amendment be turned aside and that we proceed to third reading of the bill and final passage, so as to give Mr. Rogers the full co-operation of this House to carry out his duties, which all parties believe are very important, and to establish a system of even more effective control of the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, certainly it is a pleasure to rise and speak on this amendment. I hope that in the last few days of this session of parliament—

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. A number of members are finding it too cold in the chamber. Could you have the temperature raised?

Financial Administration Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I have already spoken to the House of Commons staff and they are doing something about the temperature right now.

● (1642)

Mr. Towers: Perhaps if the hon. member got involved in the political process he might get warmed up, and then he would not feel the chill in the air.

Actually we have been disappointed because the government has not been more receptive to suggestions made. Generally speaking, in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, there has been little political manoeuvring, which speaks well of the hon. members who serve on that committee. I have participated in that committee for a number of years, and certainly it is a pleasure to witness how that committee has been changed. A number of years ago, that committee dealt with issues which were considerably in the past. We have steadily progressed to the point where hon. members can deal with the Auditor General's report shortly after the time of its presentation before the House of Commons.

Further to that, the chairman of that committee deserves a certain amount of credit, if not a great deal. It speaks well of parliament that the chairman was chosen from the opposition. Perhaps this is one reason why the committee has worked as well as it has.

We had hoped the majority would see fit to accept some of the amendments which have been presented. I do not doubt the veracity and sincerity of hon. members on the government side. Quite often good suggestions are made by members of all parties. The Auditor General and the Comptroller General require all possible assistance, if public spending is to be brought under control. There is no way for Canada to survive, if the deficit remains at \$10 billion or \$11 billion, which has been the case in two successive years. Unfortunately, this has occurred in what can be construed to be relatively good times. What will happen when the going gets tough and the economy goes into a doldrum? What will we do then? This is why it is important for the House to give the Comptroller General all the support which is possible. I am sure the Comptroller General has a certain amount of wonderment as to what the future holds for him. Undoubtedly he requires the support of all members, along with the support of the Auditor General.

I should like to refer to the Report of the Auditor General for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1977. At page 6, clause 2.3, he recommended the following:

... first, the establishment of the position of chief financial officer of the Government, preferably with the title of Comptroller General of Canada; ...

Fortunately this has been fulfilled.

His second recommendation reads as follows:

... second, the appointment to this position of a person with appropriate professional qualifications, with a proven record of outstanding competence and achievement at senior levels of responsibility, and with extensive experience as a senior financial executive in a large-scale organization in either the public or private sector; ...