

But the problem you have raised, Mr. Macdonnell, has come up in England and they have not formulated a set opinion on it yet. I was interested in Mr. Wright's point because that has been up at Westminster several times in the last few years, yet they have not got a formula for it.

We should bear in mind that as far as I am concerned I carry out whatever the House tells me to do to the best of my ability. If they wish to tell me to look into other things, I will do so, and there will be no hesitation on my part, in trying to perform my duties.

Mr. MACDONNELL: I had not the slightest intention of contravening what you said at the outset. If there was an auditor charged, it would be his job, and we could say to him: "This is your job; you go in." But in section 71 I think your rights only arise if you are requested by the government. That is not the point I had in mind. I wonder if there is some way by which you can be either set in motion by parliament, or have an inherent right?

Let me read section 71.

The Auditor General shall, whenever the Governor in Council, the Treasury Board or the Minister directs, inquire into and report on any matter relating to the financial affairs of Canada or to public property and on any undertaking or service that has received financial aid from the Government of Canada or in respect of which financial aid from the Government of Canada is sought.

Now, do you see any way by which the gap which I suggest exists can be filled? That is, you would have no right unless you were set in motion by the government. That is the point I am raising.

Mr. WRIGHT: Would that not be accomplished, Mr. Macdonnell, if the Auditor General were in fact the auditor of all crown corporations?

Mr. MACDONNELL: It would, but I am not prepared to advocate that.

Mr. WRIGHT: I think that would be the only way in which your suggestion could be effectively put into effect. As a matter of fact, I think the Auditor General should be the auditor of all crown corporations. I realize it would be putting a large load on him, nevertheless, he can build up his staff. That can be done. He is the man who is appointed by parliament to audit the books of the Government of Canada, and the Government of Canada now includes a lot of crown corporations which are operating under the Government of Canada. Personally, I think that parliament should appoint the Auditor General as the auditor for all government agencies. It would create a larger amount of work, but it simply would mean more staff. I do not know why the Auditor General could not just as easily employ more staff as do the chartered accountants, or the other agencies that are presently doing that work of auditing. The Auditor General, as the representative of parliament, would then in effect be doing the very thing you are suggesting.

Mr. MACDONNELL: Perhaps I should say a word about making the Auditor General the auditor of all crown companies. My reason for being against it is twofold: first of all, I think it would mean a tremendous addition to his staff; and secondly, that commercial auditors who are engaged in the audit of commercial accounts all the time, quite apart from telling a company that its books are right, should be able to bring in a wealth of business experience which could be useful. So, for both of those reasons, I would be against it. I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if we are not certain to finish this afternoon, would it be possible to allow section 71 to stand?

The CHAIRMAN: It is held over now. It is open. Section 71 is one of the three clauses which have not been definitely approved yet. We are now on section 86. Section 71 is still in abeyance.