

*Financial Administration Act*

government in the past year. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, I think that any intelligent, alert and experienced administrator will agree with me that to approve expenses already made, is no way to manage a private concern and even less a government.

I wish to refer to the suggestion of the Glassco Commission about a complete reorganization of the government, whether it be Liberal, Conservative Progressive, New Democratic or Cr ditiste in the financial and administrative fields. If you will have a look at the bill introduced by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury), you will notice that this measure goes precisely against the proposals put forward by the Glassco Commission.

The Glassco Commission acknowledges not only implicitly but also explicitly, that all the ministers and Crown corporations are responsible to parliament for their administration. Though we are willing to lighten the responsibilities and the financial burden of the ministers, we must all the same allow them to keep in touch with the financial management of their own department, so as to enable them to give an appropriate account of it to parliament.

The purpose of the present bill is to abolish a number of administrative posts in the office of the Treasury Board and to transfer these duties and responsibilities to what we could call "deputy administrators" which means public servants who will have no responsibility whatsoever towards the people.

They only do it through a minister who, more often than not, lacks the time to be fully informed or to keep track of what is going on in his department.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the step we are taking now in the field of administration is a step backward rather than a step forward. On the other hand, I would not like to be too drastic on this matter for we should not of course load one and same man with the burden of too many financial responsibilities. After all, we are human beings and there is a limit to what a man can do. This applies especially in the case of ministers, considering all they have to do. In fact, they have to assume the responsibility of the whole department and keep in touch with everything that is happening there.

It is interesting to note that the work will be distributed. But, on the other hand, I should like the house to be assured that the ministers will be answerable to parliament, to

a greater extent, for the financial administration of their departments. After all, it is not the civil servants who are answerable to the Canadian people, but the members of parliament.

Mr. Speaker, thirdly, I should like to point out that this delegation of powers to subalterns is not generally desirable. Although this practice has some good points, the bill before us does not give us, to my mind, the guarantee that the accounts of the ministers will be accurate, serious and complete.

I feel that the bill is lacking, especially because it does not guarantee that the members of parliament will be as well informed on the administration of the departments as they are now or, as I would wish, that they will be even better informed.

I should also like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the administrative machinery is not very flexible because it is controlled by what my English colleagues call the establishment. Indeed, until such time as the President of the Treasury Board proves the contrary, I shall claim that the establishment has far too much control over the administration, compared to members of parliament.

• (4:20 p.m.)

I do not mention it necessarily as a Cr ditiste, but merely as a member of parliament. I should be very glad, whatever the government may be, to be better informed about the administration of the various departments.

I believe that this the responsibility of every minister. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, do give us information about their department, and co-operate fully with the members of parliament in providing them with the information they need to answer the questions of their constituents, and thus to participate in an intelligent and sound manner in the work of this house.

However, some others may, under this act, refuse to give this kind of information, and I think that even government members know which ones I am talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat that this bill is inadequate. If the government's financial administration apparatus is to be overhauled, I think it should not be done piecemeal. We should go to the bottom of this question and put everything back in order.

At the very beginning when news got around that the City of Montreal was to close down "Man and His World," I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) if he agreed or if he