

Government Orders

commission is told by the justice minister: "This is what we want you to do".

The commission is required by clause 5 to submit to the minister reports that are required by the minister. It is a creature of the minister. There is nothing independent about it. It is in the legislation, to be seen clearly by anybody who looks at it. This is nothing more than an extension of the minister and his department doing work the justice department has already been contracting out. It is an unnecessary, far from independent body.

How independent is it? The complete commission is under the control of the minister. In the legislation it states clearly that these appointments to the commission and to the advisory body to the commission are held at the pleasure of the cabinet. Independent, when the cabinet can fire them out the door at its pleasure? Give me a break.

The commission is appointed by the justice minister. The advisory council, in clause 18, which is made up of 24 members, is appointed by the deputy minister and by the commission itself. The commission is appointed by the justice minister and its advisers are appointed by the commission and by the deputy minister, who is the right hand man to the justice minister. This is hardly independence.

• (1045)

There is already legislation coming forward from the justice department. One wonders how it has managed so far without the commission. The whole point of having a justice ministry is to make sure that we have proper legislation to protect the rights and property of citizens.

Legislation is supposed to be developed within the Department of Justice. It does the research and drafts legislation. Why does the minister have to appoint a select group of advisers to know what the country needs to protect the lives and property of Canadian citizens? Is he not listening to Canadians?

The minister talks a lot about consultation. We have heard him use this term in a glowing endorsement when he was talking about other legislation he brought forward previously in the House. Now the minister has another stick to beat us up with. He can say that the Law Commission of Canada which he appointed, can tell what to do and controls, although this will never be said, says that we should do this.

Canadians who have not listened to the debate, who have not examined the legislation, who do not know that the commission is anything but independent will be fooled by it. Canadians think it is another expert body they can be impressed with, the Law Commission of Canada, not the minister's commission with people who are manipulated and give him the answers and endorsements he wants.

Laws should be developed by elected legislators who are closely reflecting the wishes and the interests of the people they represent, period. They should not be developed by appointed flunkies of the justice minister. This back door elite group of hand picked Liberal policy makers have no business developing law for Canada.

The people of Canada elect representatives to do that. That is why we get the big money. Why are we also getting millions of dollars to have other people tell us what laws we need? What are we doing here? Elected representatives are well able and should be seeking all the time the views of researchers and knowledgeable citizens throughout Canada. We do not need to appoint these people and pay them to tell us what they think.

Law professors spend almost half their time in research; that is part of their mandate. They are quite happy to pass on to elected representatives the wisdom, the knowledge and the recommendations they have come up with. We do not need to pay for them.

We already have far too many boards and commissions in Canada. The money that pays these people does not grow on trees. People work darn hard for the tax money that the government gobbles up. They do not want to pay a bunch of people to do a job they have already elected people to do. It is ridiculous.

It is an insult to Canadians who are already hard pressed. They are worried about their jobs. They are worried about their futures. They are worried about having to pay their mortgages. Now they have to pay a law reform commission \$3 million a year.

The government does not have this money. It gets it from the rest of us who are working. It is a shame that in these hard economic times we would even think of asking Canadians for a few more million dollars so we can have a nice little group of appointees for the justice minister.

The parliamentary role should not be given to outsiders. Private members' bills, for example, have been developed in the House. The justice minister might consider that a very accurate law commission. I sat in the House last evening when a member asked for permission from other members of the House to withdraw a private member's bill because he said that the government had introduced legislation which essentially covered—and he was satisfied that it fully covered—the concerns and the recommendations he made in his private member's legislation. Here is a law reform commission at work that is already being paid properly within the system. This is the parliamentary role and it should not be given to anybody else.

• (1050)

One wonders if the justice minister is saying that he cannot always control and influence what his colleagues in Parliament do, so that is not good enough, and if he would rather have recommendations from people whom he can control.