

progress on the recommendations with regard to improvements in the form of the estimates to this House, can he tell the House if he is prepared to undertake, on an interim basis, improvements in the form of the estimates before the main estimates are tabled so that this House at least can inform itself as to the extent of this uncontrolled government extravagance?

**Mr. Andras:** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General was consulted about the royal commission and he said he welcomed it so I hardly see, unless this opposition desires to bring it into the political arena, where the justification for suggesting repudiation is. He joins us and welcomes this initiative. With regard to the change in the form of the estimates, I wish the hon. member would get together with the hon. member for Vegreville who clearly reminded me when I took over this portfolio not to make these changes until they had been referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

**Mr. McGrath:** A further supplementary question. May I ask the minister if he is trying to tell the House that the Auditor General, who has in fact been repudiated by the establishment of this royal commission, agreed to setting up a royal commission? Is that what the minister is trying to tell the House?

**Mr. Andras:** That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

ALLEGATION PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPROVEMENTS IN ACCOUNTING METHODS FAILS TO SATISFY AUDITOR GENERAL

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Auditor General.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

● (1440)

**An hon. Member:** You are right on, Jack.

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board who would like to usurp the position of the Auditor General. My question concerns the Treasury Board. From time to time the Auditor General has laid before this House reports of his findings with regard to the accounting of the government, and many discrepancies have been pointed out. The President of the Treasury Board suggested today that all the corrections were included in the progress report tabled in the House on Friday. If they are all there why—and this is my question—did the Auditor General have this to say in part:

... government officials directly concerned, suggest in some cases a failure to grasp fully the significance of the major deficiencies and to identify effective ways of correcting them ...

I could read the whole paragraph, but enough is said in that brief sentence quoted to show that the progress report does not satisfy the Auditor General.

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the Auditor General has made a recommendation to establish the office of the comp-

*Oral Questions*

troller general. We are not negating this; we say that it has a certain appeal and attraction, but that the question begins to bear on other important questions to do with the whole process of parliament and accountability. That is the sum and substance of it. As to all the rest of the matters he has recommended, we appreciate them and are taking them seriously. Indeed, we took that one suggestion so seriously that we want to go beyond the basic recommendation and make sure that whatever action we ultimately take fits into the other important trends coming within the parliamentary process.

ALLEGED INABILITY OF TREASURY BOARD STAFF TO PERFORM FUNCTION OF CONTROLLING EXPENDITURES—PUBLICATION OF BOARD PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Am I to understand that the Auditor General is concerning himself with management and control? However, the Treasury Board secretariat is more concerned with resource allocation. If such a resource allocation secretariat has the right to manage and control its own expenditures, how can there be a proper auditing of its expenditures? May I at this time ask the minister another question about that same secretariat? Why has such secretariat only 20 members on its staff? How can they do the work which the Auditor General says is greatly lacking and which he wants to take over?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, in full recognition of the seriousness of the question and the requirement for improved financial management and control, this year there was established an organization within Treasury Board which did not exist previously. There was the appointment of a deputy secretary, with full responsibility to develop and take upon himself those functions which the Auditor General would assign to the proposed comptroller general.

**Mr. Horner:** Yes, but they do not make their reports public.

**Mr. Andras:** All those functions have now been established. That branch is in its first phase now. I appeared before a committee this morning with supplementary estimates designed to beef-up the facilities available to that branch. Indeed, if I may speak about another area involving the same kinds of controls, the Auditor General's staff itself is going to be considerably enhanced, as will be noted when we deal with second reading and final resolution of the Auditor General's Act.

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask a quick supplementary question? Will the reports of the new secretariat which the minister has set up be made public and available to the House and country?

**Mr. Andras:** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General himself indicated that the proposed comptroller general should be an umpire. He indicated at one stage that he should be an umpire upon whom both parliament and the government can rely. Now he recommends that that function should be within the