

*Financial Administration*

meeting almost every morning and every afternoon. At any rate, I hope that it will be given sufficient time, whether at this session or at the session that begins in 1952, to do a complete and proper job on this very important measure.

I have already had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to say things in connection with this bill on two or three different occasions, and it is not my purpose today to repeat any of the things that I said on those previous occasions, or to go into the matters that I have already discussed. Indeed, the more I look at this bill the more I realize the wide number of subjects that come under its provisions. In passing, however, I would like to say that I certainly pricked up my ears when the hon. member for Greenwood began to refer to section 7 of the bill. The reason I did prick up my ears was that on a previous occasion I had expressed approval of this new section 7, because it makes possible the introduction of a suggestion system into our civil service such as the one that is in operation in the United States. When we were at an earlier stage of this debate I placed upon the record statements and certain tables showing the tremendous monetary savings that have been effected in the United States because of the use of the suggestion system, which has been in effect down there for the last four or five years. I earnestly hope that that system, or one like it, will be put into operation in this country. However, I must say to the hon. member for Greenwood that as he dealt with section 7 I realized that he was not speaking unfavourably of that part of section 7; rather, he was concerned with the latter part which has to do with payment of travelling expenses to civil servants notwithstanding the provisions of the Civil Service Act. The point is that he glossed over section 7, (d), (i), and I hope it is significant that he glossed over it. I hope it means that he supports the type of suggestion that I have been making which, in the United States, has resulted in the saving of many millions of dollars during the past few years.

However, Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago, it was not my intention on this occasion to say anything more about aspects of this whole question on which I have spoken at earlier stages. Rather, there is yet another phase of our financial administration about which I should like to say something at this time. It arises, as did some of the other comments that I have made earlier, out of the fact that the Auditor General across the years has made a number of suggestions. I am quite ready to say that the government has

accepted some of these suggestions and has incorporated some of them in the bill now before us.

I would point out, indeed, that one of the suggestions made by the Auditor General, to which I called attention only last week, is implemented in part by a notice of motion in the name of the Secretary of State (Mr. Bradley), which is in *Votes and Proceedings* for yesterday. It is a notice to the effect that a bill is to be brought in amending the Civil Service Act with respect to the salaries of the civil service commissioners. For many years the salaries of the civil service commissioners have been made up in two parts: part (a) the amount set out in the statute and part (b) an item voted in the estimates year after year. The Auditor General has commented on that several times, and has suggested that vote texts that legislate are not desirable on a long-term basis. I have suggested on several occasions that that proposal of the Auditor General should be implemented by the government. The case of the civil service commissioners is but one example of that type of thing. I am glad to see that that change is being made, and I hope the government will go on implementing that suggestion of the Auditor General; that it will go through the estimates page by page and pick out all the items that are vote texts that legislate and which have been in there year after year and put them on a proper statutory basis, as the Auditor General has suggested.

The particular question that I want to speak about today is one that is a little awkward to deal with because it does concern some of the members of this house, namely, cabinet ministers; but it too has been the subject of comment by the Auditor General in some of his reports, and also in a letter which I have on my desk, which I received from him some time ago in answer to a letter that I wrote him. To describe it in technical language, the Auditor General frowns upon items that have a continuing effect, items in the Appropriation Act of any one year, on the basis of which payments are made in succeeding years as though they were statutory.

I must say that from my study of the matter it seems it cannot be said that such payments are illegal. That seems to be quite clear, but it is also clear—and so the Auditor General says—that it is hardly a desirable practice, and he makes a suggestion as to another way in which this matter could be handled.

The best way to deal with this is to tell the story, and to show how it works out in the case of the allowances paid to cabinet min-