

*Auditor General Act*

ought to be expressed to parliament in terms of an assessment as to the global amount of money that may have been recovered by the federal treasury had these programs not been in place, is an extension of the function of the Auditor General.

Whether that information ought to be sought by members of the House of Commons is entirely another question. Whether or not it ought to be provided, perhaps by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) or the Minister of National Revenue (Miss Bégin), in terms of answers to questions on the order paper or an examination on the estimates of these ministers in terms of their past operations vis-à-vis expenditure forecasts for the coming year by way of the budget estimates, are all very valid questions for consideration.

What I have to decide is whether or not it forms a part of this particular statute to have this information collected and these judgments made by the Auditor General in order that a report can be made by him on these questions. The very notion of the Auditor General making these judgments and examining individual taxpayers' tax returns, which goes far beyond his function in examining the books of the Government of Canada, is in itself in a very fundamental way an extension of the entire concept of the basic function of the Auditor General of Canada.

I therefore find that the motions, which are all related to the same basic concept of a tax expenditure or a tax expenditure budget, introduce in their very terms an entirely new and unrelated concept to this legislation and, therefore, procedurally fail.

In order to keep things procedurally organized, we have now disposed in one way or another of all seven motions at the report stage of Bill C-20. Four were found to be out of order. Three have been discussed and divisions have been deferred. I understand that motions Nos. 5, 6 and 7 were dealt with. Is there some indication of the time at which, now that discussion on the bill has finished, those deferred divisions will take place?

**Mr. Andras:** Mr. Speaker, I am given to understand that there have been some discussions and that it has been favourably received that we take the deferred votes this evening. I believe right after the other arrangement which follows on 9:45 when we deal with Bill C-27. That is the information I have been given to understand is correct, that it is the disposition of all parties to proceed in that way.

● (2030)

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** The minister is correct when he says there have been discussions. But I might point out there are up to 13 votes to take, and this is something which cannot be done within a short period. I estimate it would take between an hour and two hours of voting starting around 9.45.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** We might start earlier.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** That could be considered. Or we might consider putting these votes over until tomorrow morning. If [Mr. Speaker.]

that is not a good suggestion it might be well to take the matter up further and discuss it during the next item of business. Then we could get back to the parliamentary secretary and the President of the Treasury Board and make some specific proposals. But I am somewhat apprehensive that if we take so many votes after 9.45 p.m. we might be here until well after midnight.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I agree with the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Hnatyshyn) that discussions should continue in the next little while to see whether the matter can be resolved. I should like to request that no consideration be given to the idea of taking these votes tomorrow morning. As the hon. member knows, a number of members are going to the funeral of our late friend tomorrow, which means leaving the House around 11.30 a.m. I still hope it may be possible to bring the starting time forward a little tonight. If we take about 15 votes at eight minutes a vote, that would account for 120 minutes, or two hours, if my arithmetic is not faulty. That is assuming the officers at the table are able to keep up that pace of eight minutes to a vote. But perhaps we continue discussions while the debate is going on in connection with the next item.

**Mr. Goodale:** In addition to the difficulty mentioned by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre the situation I see is that in the course of our business today, for circumstances which were beyond anyone's control, we adjourned slightly early both this morning and before six o'clock, losing a certain amount of time which would otherwise have been profitably spent on the business before the House. In these circumstances I hope we can work out an arrangement to dispose of the votes this evening.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am prepared to put this matter over until the House leaders have had an opportunity to take it up further, but there is one difficulty to which I must draw attention. The bells cannot ring earlier than 9.45 p.m. tonight because there is an order of the House that deferred divisions on these motions shall begin at 9.45. While there is nothing to prevent the bells from ringing for a division on these motions, if it is the wish of the House, I believe we should decide to do one thing or the other.

**An hon. Member:** What about taking this division, anyway?

**Mr. Speaker:** The point is, we have concluded the report stage of Bill C-20. I am perfectly prepared to see the House take up the Bretton Woods Agreements Act for a few minutes and then give me some advice as to the course proposed.