

*Government Orders*

In fairness to the people who asked me the question, they did not need to ask the question. They would know full well if they had been appointed. If they had been appointed they would not be so loud in their protests that I inject a disclaimer on their behalf.

If the member for Delta did not exist, we would have to create him. He is such a delight. The members of the Reform Party might have some say in that matter. There is one other item that I want to go on to.

This bill is umbrella legislation. In many respects, it is what we used to call comma legislation. It is not of any particular consequence but it tidies up some things. It needs to be done. I am not dismissing its importance but it is probably not going to create a lot of jobs. Indeed it is cutting out quite a few, for example ACOA.

I see I have my two minute signal so I had better say this very quickly. I want to spend most of my time on ACOA, an instrument of regional development very dear to my heart because I have seen the good it has done in my own riding.

I can talk to members about an agriculture operation in Bay St. George where 35 or 40 people are full time employees thanks to some initiative from that agency. I can talk to members about the salmon operation in Bay d'Espoir which employs 80 people full time where we fly salmon on a daily basis to San Francisco and Toronto and so on. It is a good producing industry that has been going on now for 10 years.

I could talk to members about people who sit in Milltown, 35 of them, and do computer inputting for companies in Germany, England and Australia on contract as a result of a little SEED money they got five or six years ago from ACOA.

I see as I look around that the transition to the new economy, the high tech part of it but agriculture in our case in Newfoundland, the transition to a new set of endeavours in Newfoundland is fully aided by that kind of agency. I sought to speak in this debate particularly to give support to it. I would be glad to invite any member of the House to go with me to my riding so I could show members some of those success stories that are the result of ACOA money.

The member has had an invitation that he has not yet taken me up on. The invitation still stands. I see my time is up.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I have just one very quick comment. Perhaps the member for Burin—St. George's will respond to it. Of all the agencies mentioned in Bill C-65, almost all of them have a little clause that reads something like this.

It says that on the day when this bill is proclaimed all people who are on the commission prior to that will cease to be on the commission. That unfortunately raises the sinister question,

why would we have to eliminate all present members of the present board? Is it because the present government wants to be able to appoint new people, displacing the patronage appointments of the past?

• (1735)

We will be watching all of those agencies very closely and noting the people who are dropped. We know they will all be dropped if this legislation is passed; we expect with a majority of Liberals it will be. Then we will be watching very carefully to see who is put back on to the boards even though it is in reduced numbers.

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, I say to my friend for Elk Island, he should be very watchful. That is what makes good government, when we have people in the opposition and in the government benches who monitor those situations.

To the first part of his question, although it is a question better answered by the minister responsible, I would fully assume that if one is going to alter the mandate of an organization, one might want to start afresh. People who were put there, given the former mandate, may or may not be qualified or as qualified to pursue the new mandate. That is just an answer off the top of my head.

It is not uncommon when winding up and redefining an organization to replenish its membership. The litmus test is the one he put his finger on. The litmus test is whether any hanky-panky—he did not say this, but I will say it for him—goes on. If there are 10 people on the board with four Liberals and six Tories or whatever, they will all be shoved aside. If when the board comes back the next day the four Liberals remain and the six Tories have all been replaced for no better reason than they had different labels when it comes to parties, then that is hanky-panky. I would be there with him when he raises the point.

**Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on his excellent speech and his very shrewd and wise comments about patronage. I wonder whether he realizes that many of the positions we have abolished were vacant. The government had the opportunity to fill them but chose not to do so.

I wonder if the hon. member would care to comment on the contrast with patronage practices of the past. He has been a member for a considerable period of time. Could he make a comment on that fact?

**Mr. Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, to my friend from Kitchener on his first point, I tried to get the figure, but I did not get it in time. There are many hundreds of vacancies on government boards now because we wanted to do the review before we began appointing people to agencies that we either no longer need in