

*Government Orders*

I have cases in my files where the length of time has been years. I have one case where the government did not pay a bill for six years. In this case, a corporation which did some turfing for the government has collected only the basic bill after six years. If the government is going to have the right to collect interest on money owed to it, then it must also give the right to Canadian citizens to collect interest.

I am a little worried about the section on collection agencies. Knowing the basis under which this government has given out contracts to work for the government, if one is a private individual, it would appear to me that this opens up a tremendous area for the friends of the government. This could result in more patronage without any control over how much the government is going to pay for that service.

The government is going to give the collection of money over to lawyers or collection agencies. I mention the Farm Credit Corporation. Only a government supporting lawyer may apply. I have a feeling that when it comes to a collection agency or a lawyer working for the government, only if one is a government supporter may one apply.

In the Farm Credit Corporation the lawyers know the business so well that the day the government changed, the lawyers turned over their files. I think that that needs to be looked at very thoroughly and we must look at it very closely in committee.

The right of remission is also in this bill. The right of remission is always there, of course, in money that is paid to the government, at least in most cases. It is there statutorily. For instance the automobile companies in Canada used to pay duty on parts coming in from the United States. Statutorily, once they had fulfilled the requirements of the auto pact, they got back the duty that they had paid. What happens in this bill is much more open again to finagling, manipulation and patronage because the decision as to whether or not there shall be remission is not statutory, it is in the hands of the minister. We should look at that very thoroughly.

My friend from Renfrew has gone, but I want to point out that section 20 of this act may be put in there for a particular reason. Section 20 gives Treasury Board the

authority to collect from people who fail to pay back money owing to the Crown. That list of people who had advances and neglected to pay them back can, under this act, be collected from, so it is not all bad. I must say when I get to that point, that it is not all bad.

There are a lot of things in here that I, and other members of the Public Accounts Committee have pointed to over the years as needing to be cleaned up. A lot of that has been done in this act. I have not had much time to go through it, so I hope that in that sense the minister is correct and that there is a lot of housekeeping in the act done to allow the government to operate a little more effectively than it has in the past.

On page 11 of the act, there is a clause on lapsing. The Financial Administration Act in the past required that if a department still had money in its coffers at the end of the year, then that money lapsed and was returned to the General Revenue Fund. For a civil servant or a director of a particular department, that is annoying and causes a tremendous amount of expenditure during the last month which is usually not good expenditure, but it did have a certain quality in that the control of the financing was there all the time.

Many civil servants will be very pleased with this change, but I wonder about its value and whether it should really be in here. It states that at the end of the fiscal year the money will not lapse in quite the same way. Money unexpended at the end of the fiscal year, after adjustments for the recording of debts incurred and other amounts due and owing, referred to in Section 37(1), shall lapse. It lapses except for the amount that you can show you owe. There is no department, corporation or agency that is going to go into the next fiscal year without making sure that anything that is possible to be charged for last year will be put on that account.

There is only one other area I want to cover, and that is the section on Schedule III. Earlier, I suggested that the definition of services and the definition of the fee would be left up to Treasury Board. The definition of the service covers a much larger area than you would expect. I will only use some of the examples in the act because there is no limitation to these particular areas of control. The act allows any department any kind of service, but they are not exact.