

The Economy

Commission is another proof of this government's ongoing concern with this subject. I am certain that this Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability will bring forth many proposals of interest and importance in its report.

No, Mr. Speaker, this motion cannot be supported. It is too vague and does not take into account the changes and proposals already put into motion by this responsible government.

● (1732)

I hope hon. members who missed the remarks of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) will read them in *Hansard*. He pointed out that over 50 per cent of the budget of this government is made up of moneys which are transferred either to people directly or to provincial governments. In other words, the day the minister lays down the estimates 50 per cent of the funds are already committed to ongoing programs. I am sure no one in this parliament would want the government to renege on agreements which have been duly signed and officially made part of the agreement between the federal government and the provinces.

I and many others are looking forward to the time when the government appoints a person who is willing and able to accept the position of comptroller general. That office will provide safeguards for the taxpayers of Canada. The person must be a highly placed and capable individual whose integrity deserves respect. If he is a person like the present Auditor General, the secretary deputies of the Treasury Board or others who are in this work now, I am sure we will indeed be assured that money paid into public coffers is properly spent.

I am sure that this government will continue its work and will see that it is done with honesty, integrity and with a view to making sure that Canadian taxpayers get all that is due them in return for their hard earned tax dollars.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add to the comments already made. I am sorry that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) is not here; I understand that he has some urgent matters to attend to. I want to reflect for a moment on his remarks today. Many of us on this side appreciate the difficulty he has in trying to get a handle on government expenditures. At one time in my business career I had the task of changing the loss position of certain companies into a profit position. I can appreciate that department heads as well as employees do not have all the solutions. If they had, certain departments and companies would not be in the position they are now. A tough line really has to be taken. Surgery is required. I think the current view of those charged with these responsibilities in other jurisdictions is that 1 per cent or 2 per cent per year is really not effective control at all.

I want to address myself specifically to deregulation. If I tend to be a little partisan in my remarks, I apologize. I think, however, that that is very normal in the atmosphere in which we work. We are partisan. I mean no offence to any individual. I will speak in generalities in this regard. There is a great deal

[Mr. Lefebvre.]

of interest in the concept of deregulation of government statutes. The interest in Canada arises for several reasons. One is the style of government we have had for the past decade. We have a neighbour to the south which speaks the same language as about 80 per cent of the people of Canada, and in many instances we tend to have a knee-jerk reaction to much of its legislation. We know that the United States is well down the road to the deregulation of some of its statutes.

A further reason for interest in deregulation is the fact that we have had one-party rule in this country for 40 of the past 52 years, and many of the programs and much of the process of legislation have become entrenched and accepted as if written in stone, never to be challenged. Rather than the government's responding to the requirements of the economy and of the people of Canada, we find the people of Canada reacting to programs put in place by a bureaucracy which we feel is out of touch with reality.

I want to examine each of these points and put some examples beside them. However, let me say at the outset that we have in the public service of Canada many thousands of dedicated public servants who know this country is in desperate straits. They know it, and they are concerned. When I make reference to bureaucratic bungling and game-playing, I am not referring to the thousands of dedicated public servants who truly want to serve Canada, who are concerned about our national plight and who want to see the country put back on course.

When I refer to the style and structure of the present government I refer to the way the rules of this House and the committee system of this House have been perverted to serve the ends of the Liberal party. I say with the deepest respect that we are not really performing the function we were elected to perform when we are in this House. We have an appointed Senate which is stacked politically. It is in fact a rubber stamp for the government.

The House of Commons is stripped of its power to control government spending because of rule changes put in place by the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in 1967 and 1968. Indeed, the House of Commons is so sterile that in one of his emotional fits the Prime Minister was moved to say, 50 yards from Parliament Hill, that members of this House are nobodies. We all remember that remark. This loose structure carries through to the committees of the House where, with the exception, perhaps, of the public accounts committee, by and large a charade is played with the legislation placed before them.

Most substantive legislation brought before this House has a structure which pushes it beyond the reach of parliament forever once it has passed all stages. The structure can be recognized by the following observations. A typical bill states that the governor in council shall make regulations as required, that regulations will be attached thereto upon proclamation and that regulations may be changed by the governor in council from time to time as required. Once that process is completed the governor in council moves in with staff require-