

this is the philosophy of the Prime Minister of Canada, head of a government which has been in office for approximately 36 of the last 42 years, it is not difficult to see what is happening to our country, and why, with that kind of thinking. In other words, this government is not satisfied with a stranglehold over the country's economy, but has a goal to exercise its dictatorship over the very well-being of its population. The longer this is perpetuated, the greater the danger of sacrificing our destiny, Mr. Speaker.

Greed is at the root of all evil, or so it is said. Perhaps greed of power is the most dangerous of the countless forms of greed we know. This government, in its attempt to camouflage inept handling of public funds, and by its willingness to continue to waste and squander that never-ending source of supply through an inadequate bill, is an excellent example of abuse of power and its insatiable appetite to spend.

The responsibilities of the auditor general are onerous; his position is one of the most important within the federal government; he should not be hampered or muzzled, restricted or ignored while he is examining the books and after he has reported the results. My preference would be to permit the auditor general of Canada to be more responsible than this legislation specifies, by giving him the power and the tools which would enable him to certify the accounts of Canada, without reservation. To place his signature of approval on those accounts there must be legislation to allow it and to protect him and his position.

Mr. Speaker, I now come to the unacceptable policy of this government of making decisions by order in council, a method by which large amounts are spent without reference to parliament or to the auditor general. That system of government is really not democratic, for the simple reason that it is secret and never publicly revealed. If the cabinet insists on carrying out its responsibilities in that manner, there should be a clause in this bill authorizing the auditor general personally to scrutinize all moneys allocated by order in council.

Mr. Paproski: Blind faith.

Mr. Towers: Yes, as my hon. friend from Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) has just said, it is now a matter of blind faith. Otherwise, not only do MPs not know, but the source of those funds, the general public, are kept in the dark as well. Who pulls the string on the order in council purse? The auditor general has said his desire is to have the relationship of his office with the government cordial, but not cosy. Nobody would frown on cordiality, but I fear that the relationship could become both cordial and cosy, though not through the intent or actions of the auditor general. What is meant by the word "cordial"? Does it mean that officials within the department of the auditor general, many of whom are former senior employees of government with a direct line of communication to cabinet, can undermine the authority and aim of the auditor general through their cordiality? Can anyone, morally, serve two masters or are there two masters? Often a slip of the tongue during friendly, harmless conversation results in harm. Do such people sever all mental connections with former

associates, business, social or otherwise? Would it be fair to expect that? Are they unconsciously influenced by their former occupation and automatic ties to government, and by their access to the orders in council which I mentioned earlier? Being human beings, we all have weaknesses and I understand it would not be easy for certain individuals to cut themselves off, so far as work is concerned, from their former attitudes and thinking while involved in government spending and decisions in one federal department or agency when they take on duties in the office of the auditor general. Can such personnel in fact detach their minds to the degree required so that they can efficiently perform their job and ably assist our auditor general?

● (1750)

An hon. Member: Keep going.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand that my colleague from Red Deer (Mr. Towers) has only a few more remarks to make, and in the interests of getting this legislation through would it be possible for him to conclude his remarks before we follow Black Rod to the other place?

Mr. Paproski: Or when we come back.

Mr. Speaker: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member concluding his remarks and possibly completing passage of the bill, without seeing the clock, when we return from the other place.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable the Deputy Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

● (1800)

[Translation]

And being returned:

Mr. Speaker informed the House that the Deputy Governor General had been pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-58, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending the 31st March, 1978—Chapter No. 22.

Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Farm Improvement Loans Act, the Small Businesses Loans Act and the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act—Chapter No. 23.