

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

reached the point where even the stringent comptrollership which my amendment suggests is not enough, and we cannot trust the council and the executive director at all—even under these circumstances—I think the hon. member for Annapolis Valley and my colleague, the hon. member for Fraser Valley West, are perfectly right, and you should ditch the thing. You cannot preserve the life of an organization when you pass the kind of law which discourages every potential volunteer, who will say, "What the devil will I do in this kind of organization where I have a czar sitting over me, looking over every act of the company? That is not what I want to join." The new arrangement which the minister proposes will not remove that basic discontent and that basic doubt in the minds of young people who might be interested in entering this field.

If that is the situation, Mr. Chairman, then I think the minister who is a friend of long standing is—and I use this word with hesitation but deliberately—too cowardly to say, "This company is no good any more and I am going to wash it out." I say to the minister that that in effect is what he is doing. He is saying that the whole idea of the company as initiated, as originally thought out, is not workable. The minister says he is going to have a trusteeship because the company is not any good, and it cannot be allowed to work even under the most stringent financial controls. Then wash the thing out. Why try to fool Parliament and the young people of Canada that he is hanging on to it when in fact he is throttling it?

When the minister decided that a trusteeship had to be imposed, why did he not accept the committee's report? Why did he have the committee established in the first place, if he intended to impose his trusteeship? A Standing Committee of Parliament recommended the imposition of a trusteeship of three people. Why could the minister not have made a simple amendment imposing a trusteeship that a committee of this House proposed? Why not follow the committee's recommendation for a trusteeship not limited to the czarist nature of this bill, a trusteeship that has some responsibility for programming in a direct way and that could really make the Company of Young Canadians work?

I now come to a legal rather than a political argument. Of course, for any legal argument there are as many opinions as there are lawyers. I say to the minister that my amendment does not endanger the company from

[Mr. Lewis.]

the point of view of lawsuits one bit more than his bill does. His bill says:

No payment of any money shall be made by the company and no contract or other arrangement providing for the payment of any money by the company shall be entered into—

That is in the future.

—or have any force or effect unless approved by the comptroller.

I say that is as true for the contracts now in force as it is for any that may be made in the future, and if this bill came into force tomorrow the comptroller could say, "The contract with the volunteers in Toronto on the Wards Island project is now terminated," and he would be in just as much legal difficulty as if the proposition I make were adopted. We will have precisely the same legal situation if the comptroller cancels any of the contracts now in force with somebody else, under signature by the company. The minister should know that. If he does not, I draw it to his attention. There is no difference. The only difference is that his bill makes the comptroller czar over everything, programming included, whereas my amendment provides for accountability of the expenditures of the company and does not entirely wipe out the spirit, principles and objectives of the Company of Young Canadians.

I plead with the minister to accept my amendment. He can have his law offices change the wording. As I said this afternoon, I am not a particularly skilful legal drafter, and he can have the wording changed by his legal officers. My amendment would achieve everything necessary to protect the funds of the company, to make sure they are not abused, and yet it will not say to the potential volunteers in Canada, "This company is entirely under the control of one man who has complete control over programs, over projects, over everything in the company." That will not go across; it is not retaining any of the spirit of the Company of Young Canadians. My amendment retains the principle that the company can have its own programs and set its own course, subject to the authority of the comptroller to refuse to make the money available if in his view this endangers the integrity of the company or abuses the funds which Parliament has voted to it.

This is all I can say, Mr. Chairman. If the minister will not be moved, if he wants this czarist power in the bill, I suggest he will do himself harm. He will merely justify the suspicion in the minds of many of us to your left