

Of those 21, I think we accepted 12 or 13. Regrettably, we were not convinced at the time that it would be wise to accept the hon. member's proposal. That explains our present position.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister a question? He was gracious enough to leave lots of time for a question. He suggested that the Auditor General and the government were afraid that this simple and expeditious procedure might lead to issues of a political nature being raised in the House of Commons. Will the minister guarantee that when the government raises issues for the Auditor General to consider, they will not be of a political nature?

**Mr. Andras:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is a matter of degree. I certainly feel that we should be referring matters of a serious nature; they could have political implications.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, the stand the minister has taken is characteristic of the attitude of the Canadian ministry and stands in sharp contrast to the attitude in Westminster, if I may use that as an example. In considering legislation over there, ministers are much more conciliatory and more attuned to accepting amendments proposed either by the opposition or by government backbenchers. They are not afflicted with the "not invented here" syndrome with which Canadian bureaucrats advising ministers are afflicted.

As most of us know—and I know, for I have served on many committees, particularly this year—when our ministers deal with legislation and a member proposes an amendment, they will say, "No, we cannot accept it. We sympathize, oh, yes." There is no suggestion in the committee meeting of outright rejection. It is almost like our private members' hour. Beneath all the flowers, partial agreement, sympathy, and what have you, there is that absolute "No." That is, shall we say, one of the less admirable features of our Canadian cabinet system. The Canadian cabinet, without doubt, has established a dominance over the House. But it fails to recognize that the administration behind it has established a dominance over the cabinet. Some officials advise cabinet ministers not to accept amendments of this sort—"Oh, they might cause problems. We never thought of them; therefore they cannot be that good." That is the unfortunate psychosis, shall we say, or mental condition which afflicts those on the government side in the consideration of amendments emanating from the opposition or even from the government's own backbenchers.

The minister has already closed his mind. I was going to argue in support of my friend, but I already have the answer—"No." Therefore, I shall leave the House, speculating only on how the minister would have argued. Surely, hon. members know that the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) wants to strike a blow on behalf of members of the House of Commons. I am astonished at the sheep-like, absolutely "blah" attitude of government backbenchers who do not realize their own throats are being cut. I was going to use another phrase. They do not realize they are being totally neutered by cabinet action. They will not be able to call in question anything the

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cabinet does in this regard. No doubt the governor in council could ask for a report, but the amendment says that when 50 members file a request, the auditor general shall look into it and report on the matter.

Those 50 members could include members on both sides of you, Mr. Speaker, and the inquiry could be on questions about which this House is greatly concerned. Frankly, I am disturbed by the minister's refusal to accept this amendment, which is an entirely reasonable one. It is the sort of thing with respect to which I have heard government backbenchers saying privately, "I wish the ministers would bend their stiff necks." They want members of the House to have some say in the administration of this question, or the discharge of their duties as individual members, instead of being mere rubber-stamps or nay-sayers at the cabinet's behest.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question is on motion No. 5 in the name of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion? All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Accordingly, the vote on the motion stands deferred. The House will now consider motion No. 6.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River)** moved:

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-20, an act respecting the office of the Auditor General of Canada and matters related or incidental thereto, be amended in clause 14

(a) by striking out line 11 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"corporation, which, along with the financial statements of the corporation or its subsidiary, shall be provided to the Auditor General forthwith upon their receipt by the corporation or its subsidiary.";

(b) by striking out line 12 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) the Auditor General shall request a";

(c) by striking out lines 25 and 26 at page 6 and substituting the following therefor:

"explanations, he shall so advise the governor in council, who shall thereupon direct the."

He said: Mr. Speaker, the perspicacity of the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) pleases me, because he knows exactly what rights I have attempted to secure for the people of Canada through the agency of this House. This bill, so far as the auditor general is concerned, represents an improvement over the Financial Administration Act under which the auditor general is operating. The auditor general is to be governed by the auditor general legislation and he is to be given some help for discharging his duties. However, this