

the kind of background that he will need in order to perform in a meaningful way. Again I say a great deal of understanding will have to be shown him by his colleagues in the senior bureaucratic service.

It concerns me a little, Mr. Speaker, to have heard a comment recently that one department was feeling that perhaps there was a need now to hire some people who would be able to interact with the new Comptroller General. I think that, of course, is simply unnecessary and really ridiculous. If individual departments have the kind of financial controls in place that they should have, then they do not need any new people to interact with the Comptroller General. Hopefully he himself will establish only a small staff. He indicated it is his desire to have just a small nucleus of people. They will interact with the existing staffs in the departments and seek out those areas where financial controls may need improving. Many of the departments may have already had weaknesses pointed out for them by internal audit systems in their own department, yet they may not have adequately addressed the matter for one reason or another.

● (2112)

I hope the President of the Treasury Board will take steps to ensure that departments are indeed not permitted to go out and hire people, simply to interact with the new Comptroller General, if, indeed, there is some consideration in the departments of doing that.

This new appointee is not going to be some sort of ogre, seeking out all the wrong things in departments. That is not his task. We have an Auditor General who will continue to examine accounts after the fact. This man's job will be to interact with the senior people in other departments to ensure they have the kinds of systems in place that will help them to render a more effective performance. Any senior bureaucrat in our system should be proud that he is able to produce the kind of results that may be sought from his department, at the best price possible and in the most efficient way. The Comptroller General will indeed be helping these people in achieving that goal.

If in some departments there are inadequate controls in place at the present time, obviously corrective measures are needed. Before hiring extra people to do that, however, such departments should look at their potential to put appropriate measures in place by making some basic decisions and possibly adjustments in allocation of existing staff.

A good deal more could be said about this bill. I hope as it moves into committee and is passed into law that the opposition parties will take a fresh look at their concern about the need to have much more definitive legislation. I hope they think about it and come to the conclusion that the leeway we grant to this position, as indeed is granted with all deputy minister appointments, is not curtailed by imposing in the legislation inappropriate detailed restrictions. Such an approach would do far more harm than good.

The basic guidelines are there for the job. They are currently in the bill. Any further definition of the role of this new

appointee must be worked out with the President of the Treasury Board and his colleagues over the course of time.

In conclusion, I commend the President of the Treasury Board and his predecessor, the present Minister of Finance, for having moved this item to the point where today, for the first time in 111 years in our Canadian history, we are going to have in place a chief financial position that any major corporation in our modern economy would simply accept as a basic organizational function in the course of carrying on its business. Government should never consider that it has less need for up to date financial control concepts than is the case in the private sector.

I wish Mr. Rogers the very best as he commences in this challenging new position in the near future. I hope he will receive the kind of support from members of this House of Commons that he will so obviously require, particularly in the initial term of his appointment, in order that he may render the effective job that is intended by the government and is certainly sought by all members of parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this matter even though I did not have any time to prepare a speech since I received the minister's statement late this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, the decision to create the position of comptroller general was made in accordance with the general purpose of the main recommendations contained in the 1976 report of the Auditor General.

According to the President of the Treasury Board, the position of comptroller general can be defined as that of chief financial officer of the federal public service. The comptroller general will be directly responsible to the President of the Treasury Board and will have the rank of a deputy minister. In general, he will be responsible for the quality and harmony of the financial administration policy and practices within the entire federal public service. He will be responsible for developing expenditure control systems as well as related administrative mechanisms so that the expenditures stay within the limits authorized by the government. In fact, the responsibilities of this new position will include the majority of those given to the financial administration branch of the Treasury Board on its establishment in March 1976.

According to the President of the Treasury Board, there will be special functional relationships between the comptroller general and the senior financial officers of departments and Crown corporations to enable him to give the necessary instructions while maintaining the concept of decentralized management.

It has been noted that the entire responsibility for the control and orientation of resource allocation and control processes will remain unchanged and come under the secretary of the Treasury Board. Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board added that the creation of this position will entail a reorganization of the secretariat of the Treasury