

Financial Administration Act

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I thank hon. members, Mr. Speaker. I will not indulge the good intentions of the House any further except to say, sir, that there is a challenge in this country to be met and there is a government inadequate to the challenge. It is important that these programs, and the funds that are available for the programs, be utilized in a fair, honest, and unwasteful manner. The government has demonstrated that it is absolutely incapable on all of those counts.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, in dealing with Bill C-10 the first thing I would like to say—and it has been said on a number of occasions—is that the government really does not want a comptroller general. There is no question that ministers were dragged, kicking and screaming, and that it was forced upon them as a result of the effectiveness of a very alert opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: I hear hon. members laughing. The fact is well known. I want to congratulate the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) who talked somewhat at length about a book entitled "A Legacy of Spending." It is an indictment of the way this government has misused and misappropriated the public purse.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton was right when he indicated that we need a comptroller general that will get involved with the Canada Council. It seems to me that what they are doing, with the acceptance of this government, is condoning undue exploitation of sex, vulgarity, indecency, filth and depravity. At the same time—and it has been mentioned by many members, particularly of late by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton—we turn a deaf ear to our veterans, and our widows.

What has happened to those who were able to become involved with the spouse's allowance? The government says, "Here is money because you are now 60"—and up to 64—"and married to someone who has the old age pension." But the moment that person, who is entitled to the old age pension, passes away, this government in its callousness and cold disregard for those who can least afford to be hit so hard, says it is going to take this money back. Yet, it condones dirt, filth, and thinks that this will be accepted by the Canadian people. Canadians want to know the priorities of this government. How can the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) stand up and say, "Well, I can't do anything about it; the Canada Council is an autonomous organization set up by parliament"? Surely, every now and again this government must take some leadership and must give some leadership.

I do not buy this bit about autonomous groups frivolously wasting and spending the taxpayers' dollars without a minister being responsible. The sooner we bring on the election, whenever his lordship wants to call it, the sooner you are going to see a dramatic change in the way this country is run. It seems to me that their flimflam, their cover-up, is not being accepted any more.

An hon. Member: What is that word?

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner).]

Mr. Alexander: Flimflam.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Spell it for him.

An hon. Member: It is the first time I have heard it.

Mr. Alexander: What the Canadian people are looking for is some honesty.

An hon. Member: What about some facts?

Mr. Alexander: I hear the hon. member requesting some facts. He ought to know that as a result of the last Goldfarb poll the Liberal party is in trouble. That is why we have not gone to the people.

An hon. Member: Tell us what you can do.

Mr. Alexander: I certainly appreciate my weekends in Ontario, because when I go out west to Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, or Alberta they all say, "Do not waste your time out here because we are going to vote Tory, we are sick of the Liberals." They have always been sick of the Liberals.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Order!

Mr. Alexander: I heard my hon. friend say order. The people in the west say, "Go back to Ontario."

An hon. Member: Could we talk about the bill?

Mr. Alexander: The hon. member who represents Oakville should know that his time is extremely limited. I do not want to bring him into it, Mr. Speaker, but he asked to be involved in this debate.

An hon. Member: All our time is limited here.

Mr. Alexander: I thought I would put something on the record as far as his future is concerned.

We are dealing with Bill C-10, Mr. Speaker, and it is a frightening bill. It has only one clause, and bills of one clause must be questioned for their motives when the explanatory note merely brings into being the comptroller general. There is merely one clause, and the explanatory note says:

The purpose of this amendment is to establish the office of the Comptroller General of Canada and to provide for the assignment of duties and functions to the incumbent of that office.

It is misleading because it does not provide for the assignment of duties and functions to the incumbent of that office. In no way can anyone read into it any particular assignment or anything that is close to an assignment.

When members of parliament see bills of one paragraph come before the House, it is necessary that they probe them and that they probe deeply, as we have probed. Once we give the government this bill, the comptroller general is gone as far as members of parliament are concerned. He will not be reporting to parliament; he will not even be reporting to an appropriate standing committee; but he will be reporting through the Auditor General. That is not acceptable to us and