

Government Orders

My hon. friend from Calgary North spoke earlier about this so-called independence. She pointed out very clearly how this commission would operate. There is no doubt the terms of reference for setting up this commission will be at the absolute direction of the Minister of Justice. Despite what the Liberals have said there is no substantive evidence to back up the claim that this will be a truly independent body. We have no reason to believe that. The Canadian people have no reason to believe that.

We have seen how the Minister of Justice operates. We have seen what he does when he wants to give some sort of credence to some of the ludicrous bills he has introduced. He goes out in the field and gathers together some of his political friends who happen to form associations and he gets them to back him up on his decisions.

The Canadian public is not buying that any more. The Minister of Justice now wants to give some extra support to some of the decisions by setting up the law commission. He will then stand in the House and present a bill without any reality of what the Canadian people believe. He is going to present the bill. He will stand up and say: "I would like to inform the House that the law commission has recommended that this reform be made to the criminal justice system". Recommended. I have every reason to believe that the law commission will simply be a rubber stamp for the Minister of Justice. It is a very dangerous situation for this House of Commons and for the criminal justice system in Canada.

• (1115)

The bill will permit the governor in council to appoint—and how many times have we heard that word—a president and four other commissioners and an advisory council consisting of 24 members. I have every reason to believe that every single member of the law commission will be a card carrying member of the Liberal Party of Canada. There is no possible way that a law commission set up by this government, by appointment of the Minister of Justice, can be independent.

There is no doubt that more Liberal appointees will be feathering their nests at the expense of taxpayers. The Liberal government knows that it will have to fight an election in two years. The Liberals want to keep their friends; it is only natural.

The justice system in Canada cannot afford to have a rubber stamp law commission which is held up as an advisory board to help the Minister of Justice put through the law reforms his cappuccino friends in Toronto want. We cannot afford that.

I doubt that when the commission is set up the justice department's budget will be reduced by an appropriate amount. I would like to be able to look into the future to see whether the justice department's budget will be reduced by \$3 million. I do

not believe the figure of \$3 million, but I would like to see the reduction. I do not think it can happen.

If the Liberals have proved anything, it is the ability to mismanage taxpayers' money. Whenever I start talking about Liberals and budgets, I have to remind Canadians that using the Liberals' numbers of 1993, in their term of office the national debt will increase by \$100 billion to some \$650 billion. The interest payments will rise by some \$10 billion to around \$55 billion. This is ample evidence that Liberals do not know how to manage money. This gives more credence to the fact that I doubt very much the budget of the Department of Justice will be reduced by the amount which will be spent to finance the law commission.

There is no compelling reason to re-establish the law commission. Law reform is possible without the creation of another government agency which will be supported by Canadian taxpayers. As I stated earlier, the commission will be nothing more than a mouthpiece for the Minister of Justice. No doubt he is desperately seeking some official body to back up his autocratic decisions on gun control and the death penalty. What better way to save his image than to spend \$3 million a year to establish a panel of yes people beholden to the Minister of Justice, prepared to put forward or support his personal decisions?

• (1120)

We should be getting our spending under control some day, but most definitely it will not be within the term of office of this government. Consider that the commissioners, the president, the board of advisers are going to be appointed by this government, by the Minister of Justice himself no doubt—

Mr. Stinson: That is the only job creation they know.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, could this possibly be part of the new Liberal job creation program? I thank my hon. colleague for bringing that to mind.

The commissioners' work can be done in the private sector. I suggest that more average Canadians be involved when it comes to making reforms in the justice system. The hon. member for Calgary North offered the services of the Reform Party of Canada free of charge to the government. We would not charge \$3 million; we would work for nothing on this.

If the Reform Party were part of this commission for nothing, at no charge, it would be possible to have a truly independent body at no cost to the government and no cost to the taxpayers. We would pick 24 Reformers out of here and we would form the commission at no charge. We would give input to the Minister of Justice which truly represented the views of the Canadian people, not the views which come from his friends in Toronto. They would be views that were representative of the Canadian people all across the country.