

Government Orders

tiveness of the council. It was not part of the government's review, but it should have been.

It is even more interesting that the current chairman of the council appointed in May 1994 is Donna Scott, a former provincial Liberal candidate in Ontario. Is she the best candidate for the job? I do not know. We do not know.

As Susan Delacourt of the *Globe and Mail* recently discovered, it seems the Liberals have a two-tiered process for appointments. There is one for qualified candidates and one for faithful Liberals.

Patronage is not only limited to the Canada Council. Several other agencies in this bill have been affected. Let us look at the National Capital Commission.

The NCC's decisions are mired in secrecy and there seems to be universal demand that it be more open. Yet the current Minister of Canadian Heritage has no plans to enforce significant change at the NCC. He is reported to have said, and one wonders where his brain was when he said this: "On accountability for the NCC it is a bit more tricky because it is not an elected body". It is spending my tax dollars and those of the other members.

It should be noted that one of the NCC's members is Pierre Isabelle, the son of a former Liberal MP from Hull. The list continues. Andrew Ogarcenko, the director of the National Arts Centre is a well known Winnipeg Liberal supporter.

The Cultural Property Export Review Board appointed a new chairman in November 1994. Mr. Ian Christie Clark was the special adviser to a Liberal Secretary of State who founded the CPERB. He was also its founding chairperson in the late 1970s. He lost that position under the Tories, but like a proverbial yo-yo, Mr. Clark has returned to the post he created for himself.

The National Film Board is in dire need of change. Michael Spencer, a respected National Film Board executive from 1946 to 1967 and the founding boss of what is now Telefilm Canada has advocated chopping the NFB's annual \$80 million budget in half. To date this government's response to the ongoing problem at the NFB has been to decrease the number of NFB board members by two. Those are earth shattering reforms indeed.

How can the government hope to effect real change in the public service without addressing these concerns? In this era of fiscal restraint, the Canadian taxpayer has to be assured the advisory boards and councils are being held accountable for the money they spend.

They need ironclad guarantees that these organizations will not be subject to patronage appointments but are staffed with the most qualified people available. Unfortunately, Bill C-65 does not provide the Canadian taxpayer with these guarantees.

• (1710)

Liberal loyalty in this country is rewarded with jobs, jobs, jobs, and all of them are patronage based appointments. Stay tuned, Canada, because even now the turnover in our legal community, which is another patronage based organization, is beginning to rattle through the provinces. Liberal linked lawyers and not Conservatives are now being chosen to act as agents for federal cases in provincial courts.

Legal agents, as I understand it, are the law firms that receive work, parcelled out by the government, and mostly handle drug prosecutions. In 1993-94 about 600 firms were legal agents and billed Ottawa for nearly \$45 million. The system has been a traditional form of patronage.

Legal patronage has not been a flawless process for our Prime Minister's government. The Progressive Conservative appointees who have been tossed out are now suing prominent Liberals and making the issue public.

Some Liberals resent that party loyalists have not been appointed faster. That is scandalous.

Historically, new governments lost no time dropping hundreds of agents and replacing them with party loyalists. Our justice minister, to his credit, has tried to proceed more slowly. He wants to overhaul the system by replacing the number of agents and introducing guidelines. Wanting to is very different from acting, and we are waiting.

Some Liberals feel our justice minister made them lose face by failing to provide patronage plums fast enough to supporters. They believe competent candidates should not be discarded because they are Liberals. At the same time, talk of reform has set high expectations so replacing any Conservative lawyers would make the government look hypocritical.

This is the cynical and corrupt face of patronage, no matter where it exists at any level of government today. I hear hon. members of this House smacking one another on the side of the head because they have this patronage in the Liberal government. Then we have Mr. Parizeau's government involved and they smack them up a little. What we are looking at is a corrupt system and that has to change.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, in my closing comments, where is the accountability to the Canadian people? Where is our responsibility as elected representatives to the Canadian people? Where is the consistency of members of Parliament so we truly represent one another and ensure that these councils, boards, agencies and commissions are truly open to the Canadian people?

So much for the Liberal red book promises of a fair system.