

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

the persons they appointed as volunteers. I think it is a disservice to condemn those people who offered their time, their lives and whatever competence they had to a worth while cause for almost no pay. I am not prepared, and I hope no member of this House is prepared, to condemn the young people who gave their time and services for almost nothing, in most cases, in order to do a job for their country in accordance with the principles in which they believed and for which they thought the Company of Young Canadians was established.

Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to make a lengthy speech. I have indicated the general outline of my approach to this matter. Flowing from what I have said, however, I cannot accept a bill which sets up a Czar over the Company of Young Canadians. That is not an exaggeration. It sets up a complete dictator over the Company of Young Canadians, and from the wrong angle. I do not approve of a dictator or a Czar from any angle, but this approach is certainly from the wrong angle. He will control the program, the projects and everything else merely by ordering that certain moneys shall or shall not be paid. There is in the bill before us nothing which talks about policies or programs, nothing which tells us what the objectives or the new situation is to be.

We see by clause 1(2) that no payment of any money shall be made by the company and no contract or other arrangement providing for the payment of any money by the company shall be entered into or have any force or effect unless approved by the comptroller. That means that a stamp, a piece of paper or anything else cannot be purchased without the O.K. of the comptroller. Further, it means that the council and the executive directors cannot enter into a contract with any volunteer or anyone else for any project unless the comptroller approves.

I think the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) was frank enough yesterday to say—and if I am wrong he will correct me—either during his speech or in answer to a question during the question period, that this is a sort of trusteeship. He is right, except that it is not a form of trusteeship in any meaningful sense, because the trusteeship proposed by the committee, even though I personally am not happy about it, was one which would deal with programs, projects, objectives and the total ambit of the company.

The trusteeship to be established by this bill is such that one man will be able to say

[Mr. Lewis.]

what is and what is not to be done merely by agreeing or disagreeing with the payment of a certain amount of money. I cannot think of a worse way to develop self-confidence on the part of the volunteers, to instil any sense of responsibility in the company or promote any purposeful work by the volunteers. Therefore, I think this proposal is wrong in principle and wrong fundamentally. I think we could easily get what we want without having this kind of dictatorship written into the act.

I want to make clear, as have some of my colleagues who have preceded me in speaking to this bill on second reading, that we share everyone's concern and are just as anxious as anyone about the financial accountability of the company, about the fact that money has been wasted and that money has obviously been misused. We believe there ought to be financial accountability. I think, however, that can be achieved without making this man a total dictator over the company.

Therefore I move, Mr. Chairman:

That clause 1 be amended by:

1) inserting after the word "shall" in line 11 the following words, "have supervision over the expenditures of the company and shall".

● (4:40 p.m.)

I shall come back to that in a moment and make clear what it means. The second part of the amendment reads as follows:

2) deleting subclause (2) and substituting the following therefor: "The comptroller shall be a co-signatory on every cheque issued by the company and no cheque issued by or in the name of the company shall be valid without his signature".

I am not guaranteeing that this is the best language, although it is simple enough. I am suggesting that we can achieve complete financial accountability in this way, and that we will avoid giving one man complete dictatorship over the company. The first subclause as amended by me would read:

(1) Forthwith upon the coming into force of this section the Governor in Council shall appoint a comptroller of the company who shall have supervision over the expenditures of the company and shall hold office during pleasure and shall be paid by the company such salary as is fixed by the Governor in Council.

This would establish that the role of the comptroller is to supervise the expenditures of the company, not its program or its policies. The second part of my amendment is to delete subclause 2 and substitute something therefor, so that instead of saying that this man has control over every penny that may be paid out, and over every contract, he shall