

Financial Administration Act

Mr. Langlois (Mégantic): The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam never ceases to astonish me. Today he seems to be clairvoyant, but on other days he seems to be a little bit short-sighted. I am always embarrassed for the former premier of Saskatchewan. In some respects I am somewhat surprised at the proposal contained in subsection 7 of clause 3. If we recall correctly, this provision was probably amended following the Victor Spencer case which was brought before the house. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam said entire responsibility for this matter lies with the cabinet. Well, I would not know who else would have responsibility. If a person has been accused of a breach of security, it is up to the government to deal with that person. Parliament will know about it when any such action is taken. This is a better system than we used to have.

Everyone, Mr. Chairman, has a right to a fair hearing. If there is no cause for alarm after the hearing has been conducted, the man should be rehabilitated and the case set aside. If there is any doubt in a security case, can that man stay? These remarks apply to a person who has been accused by the government. But suppose it is a case like that of Calvin Macdonald who has not been accused by the government? He has no remedy in trying to get a fair trial. The minister may say this matter does not come under his jurisdiction. However if a man is an agent for the R.C.M.P., part of his pay is withheld to rehabilitate him when he is no longer an agent.

If someone is being accused, then it is the government's responsibility to assure that person a fair hearing. Mr. Macdonald is being tried by public opinion because of the government's silence. If we go around suspecting people and accusing them, then it is up to the government to give these people an opportunity to clear themselves. I am not too concerned with whether or not the government appoints the judge for this inquiry. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam says the government should not name the judge. However, the government names all the judges. I do not believe in this system of nominating judges, but I believe that until it is changed we have to accept it. If a man who has been accused is given a fair hearing and is found guilty, then that should be the end of the matter.

● (9:00 p.m.)

In this case a man and his family and all those involved have been left in a state of

suspension, and I think this is a grave injustice. The government says that it cannot do anything in a case like this. I would draw attention of hon. members to what happened in the case of Leopold. So why cannot the same thing happen in the case of Macdonald? If the man was not an R.C.M.P. agent he should be locked up. He has accused members of the former C.C.F. party and other members of the House of Commons, though not in a derogatory way. He made reference to Mr. Coldwell, a man I respect and who was nominated for the commission.

There have been a lot of protests over the Victor Spencer case, yet in the case of Macdonald there has been nothing but silence. Why is this, Mr. Chairman? Is it because some cabinet minister says the guy is a crackpot? Who is any cabinet minister to call someone that? I think some members of the cabinet may be crackpots, but we still have to put up with them. If this man was either working directly or indirectly with the R.C.M.P. and they were paying him, then he was working for the R.C.M.P. Now he has been found out. Nevertheless the government should look into this question and publicly state one way or the other exactly who this man was and what he was doing. This is the responsibility of the government.

In matters like this there may be many doors to pass through and sometimes they are all closed. If this parliament had not acted on the Victor Spencer case, then perhaps this clause might never have been in the bill. Unfortunately he died suddenly before the matter could be cleared up. But the other gentleman is not dead and neither is his family. I think the government should make a public statement on the matter and if under this clause the man deserves to be rehabilitated, then the government should take action.

The only reason I spoke on this clause is that on one side we talk of rights and on the other side we forget about them altogether. You would be surprised, Mr. Chairman, how many people do not know what they are talking about when they discuss Calvin Macdonald. All they know of him is that he was the guy who threw the blood bomb.

If a member of parliament cannot get a reply from the government, Mr. Chairman, just imagine how difficult it is for the little man out in British Columbia. I do not know whether the government is waiting for some brain wave or some fancy idea, but sometimes we forget to take our own responsibilities.