

Auditor General

standings evidenced by those on the other side of the House who spoke this afternoon. May I begin with a glaring example of an inaccuracy? The hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) purported to suggest that this government has shown a signal lack of co-operation with the Auditor General with respect to meeting recommendations he made.

The hon. member went back to the 1973 recommendations, but failed to take into account that there had been an intervening second report and, indeed, a progress report since tabled by the minister. The hon. member suggested that the Auditor General was complaining that he had not received the co-operation of the government in terms of the increased numbers of people he needed for his staff. I suggest that since 1973 that staff has risen to 376 persons. Compared to the total staff of Treasury Board, which is only 750, it is rather substantial. Indeed, when interviewed over television on the weekend, the Auditor General suggested he was quite satisfied that the government had given him every co-operation with regard to what he needed in terms of manpower. That being the case, I wonder where the hon. member obtained his evidence with regard to that kind of co-operation not being given.

● (1750)

Even though this motion was moved by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) and his party, none of them had the courtesy to remain in this House to hear the last of the debate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Daudlin: With regard to the implementation of recommendations, the hon. member for Vegreville turned to page 37 and, quite properly, read item No. 417. He outlined six recommendations that were acted upon. I must confess that I ventured into this subject only recently. I suppose I am somewhat like the United States secretary of state who once said that he may be foolhardy, but not suicidal. Perhaps I am acting in a suicidal way. A progress report was presented to this House ten days ago. I find that by doing a bit of arithmetic you come up with 22 recommendations that were acted upon. Ten recommendations were agreed to, although in a modified sense, and will be acted upon. There are only two that have not been accepted.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question.

Mr. Daudlin: Mr. Speaker, if I had 20 minutes, as the hon. member did, I certainly would. Perhaps he can ask his question when I have finished. I might say to the hon. member that this is not an apology I am making, but a correction of errors made on the other side.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Daudlin: The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) made much of what his party would do in terms of openness. I do not know what that party can do about openness when they cannot even read the material before them. When they do, they twist it to their own advantage. I do not want to give the impression that I am completely satisfied with the performance of the government in this regard. I do not want to suggest

that everything that needs to be done has been done. However, when it comes to something like the royal commission which was chastised by the last member who spoke, suggesting that it was improper, I want to point out that when interviewed on the weekend the Auditor General said he could think of no better way of dealing with the issue of accountability than a royal commission. He said, as well, that he knew of no better way of dealing with Crown corporations and how they might be viewed by parliament. However, the party opposite has the audacity to suggest that is wrong. I cannot understand them.

I do not believe that the question of the comptroller general has been completely thrown out, even by members on this side. We perhaps do not agree that he should have the power the Auditor General described in his report. Perhaps by upgrading the powers of the financial officer in the Treasury Board, the Auditor General would get what he wants. We want to be assured that the reporting continues to be through the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras). The powers of parliament must not be encroached upon; this House must remain supreme. Indeed, with a royal commission we could get that satisfaction.

The Auditor General has demonstrated that the committee has and will continue to co-operate with him. Indeed, it is trying to implement everything he has put forward. However, I am sure all hon. members realize that even a good watchdog does not expect to be fed every time it barks. This House has to reserve unto itself the independence and right to examine with care the recommendations that officers of this House and watchdogs of this House make. I do not think we can go holus-bolus into this, adopting everything that comes before us, ending up, as we are sometimes described, as a rubber stamp.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, last night the chief government whip indicated to the House that the business for tomorrow would be Bill C-19. As a result of that information, great preparations were made for the continuation of that most important debate, especially in view of this government's dismal record. I now understand he has a correction to make. I am sure it was inadvertent, that he did not mean to mislead the House and now wants to correct the record.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the hon. member is following in the footsteps of his ex-leader, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). He said he would never ask a question in this House without knowing the answer. I wish to say to the hon. member that we on this side of the House can take a joke.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. It being six o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to section 11 of Standing Order 58, proceedings on the motion have expired. Therefore, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock.

At six o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.