

Financial Administration Act

so true that at the last election I was invited to the swearing-in of the lawyer I had defeated. I congratulated him and told him publicly as he is a friend of mine: I should not be the one to congratulate you; it should be the other way around because if I had not defeated you, you would not have been appointed judge. He understood and replied: That is true, if I had been elected to parliament, I would not be a judge now.

Mr. Speaker, this is another case of such an appointment and I suspect that this is what will happen under this bill when a public servant is appointed by the party. We read in the bill that a person appointed by a party will play the role of advisor and counsellor to the government and the various departments. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, this sounds false; this distorts the vocation of the public servant because he will be held in a strangle hold as many are now and as the government itself is held captive by financial interests.

If this person is to be appointed as a result of party pressures, we will have only what we can expect. I believe that it would be more logical to have an elected comptroller general. He could be elected in parliament by a majority of two thirds. This way I believe we could have a public servant who would be completely outside of political influences. I cannot believe that the 264 members of parliament could not find in Canada someone objective enough to forget party politics. I suggest this would be the best way to choose such a person, a person whom I consider somewhat like the defender of the people, like the ombudsmen who now exist in Canada and the provinces.

Of course, I believe that the responsibilities of the comptroller general are as great and even greater than those of a minister in charge of a department. However, I do not believe that it would be logical for the comptroller general to report to the auditor general. Under the bill, he would report to the auditor general rather than to parliament.

It is the auditor general who will evaluate his work and he will be asked to submit his report to him. But he should submit his report to parliament so that this institution may review it as it does for the auditor's report. Those two men will certainly not share the same bed. They will have separate responsibilities and they should not depend on each other because, if they are two friends and particularly two friends from the same party, they will forgive many things to each other.

As concerns the rights and duties of that comptroller general, as I said earlier I think that his duties are even more important than those of the auditor general himself. The comptroller will certainly have control over taxation. This comptroller should have executive powers and not only act in an advisory capacity. He will have the right to control taxation rates as well as the Canadian debt so that a government may not decide to multiply taxes and deficits as today. In the last ten years, we have only heard about taxes and deficits.

I think that if the comptroller could demonstrate to the government the adverse effects of this uncontrolled debt, it

would be good for the health of the Canadian economy and beneficial to everyone. We should also control pensions, particularly old age pensions that are totally ludicrous. They are ludicrous because we say that our pensioners will get \$254, but it is not true. They get old age pensions of \$150 and \$155 and the rest comes from welfare or the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Society, as long as Canadians will not be recognized the right to a full pension because workers have to contribute to a full pension, but when it is time to collect the pension, they are given only 50 per cent of it.

A comptroller could show that to the public and tell the government to stop fooling the people. The pensioner is asked during all his working life to pay 100 per cent unemployment insurance premiums, social security premiums or pension contributions, but he is not told that, at the time of retirement, he will be entitled to only 50 per cent of a given insurance, the old age security and a few dollars from the Quebec Pension Plan. And if he gets more, the Quebec Pension Plan will take his old age security from him. He is not told that and to top it off he is offered a ludicrous basic exemption that makes him pay taxes even on his old age pension. I think that if the comptroller were here he could prevent the government from causing all those difficulties to our pensioners and it is absolutely necessary in a democratic system to have a man able to advise the government.

There is certainly no shortage of civil servants but I feel there is no expert to tell the government how to spend some of the subsidies. Sure, subsidies are granted by the Department of Employment and others, but how are they spent? I do not have enough time to go into that but I believe there is much to be said about the subsidies of the Department of Employment. Besides, people complain a lot about the way they are spent, and especially those of DREE.

For my part, I call that department the department for the distribution of subsidies to privileged people. It is a typically political department, 100 per cent political, where the money spent is the least profitable. We find small millionaires who became millionaires thanks to those subsidies; no control was exercised over those funds and we end up finding out that of the \$400 million to \$500 million allotted in subsidies by the department, only about some \$200 million were wisely spent, that the other millions disappeared into thin air as dust would in the wind. If we had a comptroller such circumstances would occur less frequently and we would have a better idea of how the money is spent, that money, our money, our tax dollars are spent in Canada. We often get leaflets in which the government explains how our tax dollars are spent but there is a world of difference between what they say in those folders and what we see happening. If the leaflets were written by a comptroller and checked by the auditor general, I think that literature would inform the Canadians generally far better. Once again, it is not that I am against the appointment of a comptroller; it is just that I should first like to see the terms well defined, so