

I want to reiterate that the introduction of this new office will not in any way change the responsibility of the secretary of the Treasury Board in the field of resource allocation.

As explained in detail to the Public Accounts Committee last April 26, the secretary will retain responsibility for the direction of the resource allocation and the control processes of funds; and ensure that they will not be reallocated without due authority.

That does not leave very much authority for this man who was supposed to reclaim some control over the expenditures of the government, and for this reason I think Mr. Rogers will have a very difficult job indeed.

● (1242)

I listened with a great deal of interest to the address given by the hon. member for Scarborough West (Mr. Martin). He criticized the opposition for dealing in such detail with what he referred to as a very short bill. He suggested that Mr. Rogers needs the full support of this House in assuming such a difficult assignment. I agree 150 per cent with that statement. It is a difficult task because the finances of the government are in a horrible mess. It is a difficult task because, while preaching restraint, this government has embarked on a spending spree unparalleled in our history. It is a difficult task because of the waste and extravagance that are abounding on every hand. Information concerning this extravagance is being published from day to day in the various periodicals and newspapers across the country. It is a difficult task because of the uncertainty and the frustration that are strangling our economy at the present time. I agree that this is a difficult task and it will require the full support and co-operation of everyone in order that Mr. Rogers will be able to do the job assigned to him.

While we have confidence in Mr. Rogers and we believe that the comptroller general designate has the necessary qualifications, we do not trust this government to allow him to do the job which the Auditor General envisaged when he recommended the creation of this office. This action of the chairman of the Treasury Board is long overdue. It is too bad this post was not created earlier, and that the man appointed was not given certain prerogatives and responsibilities. Perhaps then we would not be in the mess in which we now find ourselves. In any event I wish Mr. Rogers well in his new job. I hope that he will be able to discourage this mad spending spree upon which this administration embarked when this Prime Minister took office ten years ago and which still continues.

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members of the House listened with interest to the most thought provoking and profound remarks of the hon. member for Fraser Valley East—

Mr. Patterson: West.

Mr. Mazankowski: I am sorry. But to be sure I checked last Wednesday's *Hansard* and either there is a misprint in *Hansard* or the member has made an error, but I thought it was Fraser Valley East.

Financial Administration Act

The hon. member outlined in very precise chronological form some of the trends which have occurred under the Trudeau administration. There is no question that some of the points he raised provide some nourishing thought to Canadians. In his remarks he pointed out some of the root causes of the problems we face, the devaluation of the dollar; excessive spending; the continual deficit budgeting and poor management of our affairs. Over the last ten years only one balanced budget has been presented by this administration. The accumulation of these errors in judgment and incompetence in mismanaging the economic and financial affairs of this country has helped to put Canada in a very difficult situation in the international world. Our performance amongst the OECD countries has been less than satisfactory, and we certainly have a lot of improving to do.

I could not help thinking while the hon. member was speaking that it will not matter how many comptrollers general we appoint or how much more we give the Auditor General in terms of financial resources to do his job properly. The responsibility for resource allocation in this country is the responsibility of this government. I am convinced that this government will continue to waste, it will continue to practice its habits of extravagance, and it will continue to attempt to buy off the Canadian voter. It will continue to use the office of the Prime Minister and the offices of respective cabinet ministers, indeed the government as a whole, to cling to power. We have an example of that today with the absence of so many members of the cabinet who are on an electioneering tour of western Canada. There is no question that this can be termed as electioneering at public expense.

When the public witnesses these kinds of things happening it adds to the growing lack of confidence which the public is placing in governments as a whole and in institutions of parliament. The fact that parliament has lost control and cannot effectively take action to curb these abuses which have occurred with increasing frequency is probably because we have had a government in power far too long. There is a growing cynicism in the minds of Canadians. They are not getting fair value for their dollar, those dollars which are being spent on their behalf by the government of the day. This cynicism and lack of confidence are not receding. I say to you, sir, they are growing.

We are dealing with a bill which will establish another level of bureaucracy. I support the principle. It is not, as I said earlier, an effective check for ensuring that our financial resources are allocated for the right purposes. This will be a check to ensure that the money which parliament has appropriated for the department in question will be spent in that area, and that area only. There should not be waste and extravagance after the allocation has taken place. We have seen an increase in the amount of financial resources going to the Auditor General's office, which I support and which is necessary. We will witness another large expenditure of money committed to the office of the comptroller general.

As I sat and listened to the hon. member I thought about some of the issues and the extravagance and lack of concern