

Government Organization Act, 1983

some of those agreements, he found out he had to buck the Department, that the Minister was not willing to stand behind him and that he lacked the political clout to implement the agreements in which he had entered in good faith.

Even where a Parliamentary Secretary acts in an effective way as a troubleshooter, we see the situation is often a fraudulent one. It increases the appearance of accountability and increases the appearance of access to Government but in many cases it lacks effective substance.

While we recognize there is some justification for appointing Parliamentary Secretaries to key Ministries, Ministries where there is a heavy workload involved, we oppose the idea that this can be used to justify a Parliamentary Secretary for every Minister, including junior Ministers who report to senior Ministers. It is almost as though having a Parliamentary Secretary for some of these junior Ministers is the equivalent to having the key to the executive washroom.

We oppose the appointment of an increased number of Parliamentary Secretaries. We see this as opening the way for more patronage. This Government has a sorry record on the whole question of patronage. If I were in the Government, I would be trying to cut down the appearance of patronage rather than going along with the situation like this, one through which most Canadians will see and which will be recognized as an increase of patronage. Of course, patronage is the only method the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has for keeping his caucus in line. Perhaps he needs a little more of it at the present time as his unpopularity grows by leaps and bounds.

We believe in difficult times the Government should begin to count the cost of Government. Instead of magnifying that cost and enlarging the size of Government in areas where it is absolutely unnecessary, the Government should begin to show a little bit of restraint. In our Party we believe that restraint has to begin with Government itself rather than its being a method of loading repression on ordinary people. We believe the Government itself should begin to exemplify that spirit of restraint. We certainly do not see it in any proposal that would increase the number of Parliamentary Secretaries.

Our Party is particularly opposed to the idea that Senate appointees could become Parliamentary Secretaries. We know, and all Members of this House know, that the Senate is already the greatest source and goal for Government patronage that we have in Canada. We only need to look at some of the recent appointments to see where the Prime Minister has appointed his personal cronies to the Senate. I suppose we should be thankful in our Party that he chose to appoint the former Member for Spadina to make way for the present Member, but apart from that we have not seen much to commend in Senate appointees.

The Senate as a source for Parliamentary Secretaries is completely unacceptable to our Party. The Senate is an unelected body and an unrepresentative body, a body that is completely out of touch with the thinking of ordinary Canadians. Perhaps the best illustration of that is the most unfortunate case that we saw when the Senate was considering the

constitutional accord and Conservative Senator Donohue made racist comments about Canadian Indian people. Although the Senator was a Conservative, even other members of the Senate from the Liberal Party did not feel it incumbent upon them to speak out against this because they thought it was more important to maintain the kind of comfy old boys' tradition than to condemn that kind of racist, bigoted attitude. That is the sort of people we have in the Senate. I say, we do not want them as Parliamentary Secretaries.

We say we do not need any increase in the number of Parliamentary Secretaries. We are not opposed to the basic principle of having some Parliamentary Secretaries, but the number should not be increased at the present time. We are absolutely opposed to the principle of piling patronage on top of patronage and appointing Parliamentary Secretaries from the Senate.

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak very long. As I mentioned before in my two earlier interjections, I have quite strong views about Clause 25 of the Bill. I do not think it will take a long speech to explain them. I maintain that, for reasons I do not fully comprehend, the ancient and important tradition of the Parliamentary Secretary, whose origins are in the British House, has been substantially and, in my view, outrageously eroded in the last dozen years. It has been eroded primarily by a decision taken by the current Government to make a Parliamentary Secretary an almost automatic appointment. The current practice is that Parliamentary Secretaries are appointed on a rotational basis for a term not to exceed a total of two years. A consequence is that every Member of the backbench of the current Government, if he arrived here, for example, ten years ago, can at some point reasonably expect to become a Parliamentary Secretary, automatically, regardless of merit or ability. That is a shame.

● (1650)

The best tradition for Parliamentary Secretaries was that at any given time when you have a Ministry—this Ministry has 35 Ministers and it will be 36 if we get a new Minister of Mines—it is not unreasonable to assume that the Government of the day, of whatever Party, may need to look down the road for the potential replacement of perhaps half a dozen or a dozen Ministers. In fact, in the history of this Parliament, the largest shuffle of a Cabinet ever held removed six Ministers. That was the largest elimination of Ministers conducted in a shuffle.

Mr. Lambert: Other than by election.

Mr. Bosley: Yes, and the next election will potentially remove quite a few Ministers from office. However, that is a different subject for a different day.

Any Government that wants to be in a sensible management position of the country's affairs should attempt to train and prepare newer Members of Parliament, men and women, for office potentially as a Minister. If the maximum number to be replaced at any one time is to be six, which is our history, it