

Manpower and Immigration Council

their functions are being usurped or if they feel they are being ignored. I hope the minister will come to grips with these problems of employees who have given long and loyal service. I hope he will make sure that, despite Bill C-150, the incentive of the personnel of the department to come to grips with the technological and other problems the department is facing will not be sapped. The minister and his department should not be absolved from their responsibilities because of the step we are taking this afternoon.

Another fault of the bill—this is almost standard and can be only partly cured by an amendment such as I have suggested—is that it gives an increasing measure of discretionary power. Discretionary powers increasingly appear in the legislation that comes before this house. More and more we are being asked to give our blessing to measures which give wide areas of discretion to ministers of the crown. This is a trend, I suppose, at this point in our history and one cannot completely reverse the tide. Nevertheless, the powers to be given to the minister and the council should be as specific as possible in order that all those serving in this proliferation of councils, boards and committees will know that the parliament of Canada is concerned about what they do and how they recommend that the taxpayers' money be spent.

Finally, sir, I have to say another word about the field of discretion. The minister is going to ask certain bodies to choose members for the council, the boards and perhaps the regional committees. I am wondering what the minister is going to do when it comes to picking certain people from his own province. Will he go to the Confederation of National Trade Unions or the Canadian Labour Congress? Will he send a letter to these bodies, flip a coin, or go to somebody else? I submit that the minister may find himself in a bind on this point.

I repeat, sir, that at the appropriate stage I shall move, seconded by the hon. member for Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes (Mr. Régimbal), that a new clause be added to this bill so that the council to which the boards must report will be required to lay a report of its proceedings before us. In that way we shall know whether the objectives of this legislation are being met. If I may also borrow a parallel from the Economic Council of Canada, which is not the happiest jewel in the Liberal crown but is a very useful jewel for Canada, I suggest that the council might publish studies and reports as it sees fit for the guidance of the public in the difficult and tremendous

[Mr. McCleave.]

problems facing us in the technological decades of the twentieth century.

Mr. Speaker: If the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. Knowles: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister had intended to speak at the beginning of this debate but was beaten to the gun by the hon. member for Halifax. Could there not be unanimous consent to let the minister speak now, while still leaving it open for others to speak afterwards should they wish to do so?

Mr. Speaker: If that is the wish of the house, unanimous agreement is first required in order to dispense with the rule.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: If the minister speaks now he does not close the debate.

Mr. McCleave: Perhaps I should apologize to the minister for being slightly spryer in getting to my feet than he was.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): The only thing it proves is that the hon. member for Halifax is probably slightly younger than I am.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, speaking on the resolution preceding the bill now before us, I said that the purpose of the bill is to reorganize the structure of the advisory councils which my department has inherited. The three current organizations which, on the whole, meet only part of the requirements of my department, will be replaced by a single council, the structure and membership of which will correct the failings of the existing organizations.

The legislation provides for the establishment of one main council to advise the minister in all areas under his responsibility. The council shall be made up of one chairman and of a maximum of 15 members appointed for a maximum of three years. Obviously, my hope is to select competent and representative people from their own environment. We shall consult representatives of the principal organizations and of the groups particularly interested in the aims we are seeking to achieve.

The hon. members will note that the role of the council is in no way restricted or limited. Its job will consist in advising the