

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

purpose who, while clothed with the rank and status of a departmental minister and supported by a staff of public servants, would be charged with a particular mission, usually of a policy nature, generally of short, or at least not necessarily of permanent, duration.

Finally, there is the fourth kind of minister: the minister who is assigned primarily to assist another minister and who would be called a minister of state. A minister of state might assist a minister with particularly heavy responsibilities or with a specific responsibility requiring special attention. Ministers of state would be able to receive powers, duties and functions from other ministers, and would be responsible to Parliament directly in accounting for the manner in which they exercised them.

The possibility of transferring powers, duties and functions to a minister without portfolio has not been precluded. The clear intention is, however, that this position would be used for the purposes its title suggests, and that in the future a prime minister would no longer feel compelled to assign to ministers without portfolio responsibilities which would be much more appropriate to other categories of ministers.

I may endeavour to summarize. With the enactment of the ministries and ministers of state act, there would be four categories of ministers of the Crown. Ministers in all four categories would be appointed on the advice of the prime minister by commission under the Great Seal of Canada, to serve at pleasure, and be responsible to Parliament as members of the government of the day and for any responsibility which might be assigned to them by law or otherwise.

Departmental ministers would occupy an office created by statute to which are attached powers, duties and functions defined by statute; have supervision and control over a portion of the public service known as a department; be limited in number by the number of statutory ministerial offices; have salaries provided for by title in the Salaries Act; and seek appropriations on their own from Parliament to cover the cost of the activities for which they are responsible.

Ministers of state for designated purposes would occupy an office created by proclamation on the advice of the prime minister; be limited in number by statute to five; be charged with responsibilities for developing new and comprehensive policies in areas where the development of such policies is of particular urgency and importance; have a mandate effectively determined by the prime minister which would be of such duration as to enable them to come to grips with the policy problems assigned to them; receive powers, duties and functions and exercise supervision and control of relevant elements of the public service; and seek parliamentary appropriations independently of any minister to cover the cost of their staff and operations. They would have a "secretary" who would have the status and authority of a deputy head for the purpose of the Financial Administration Act and the Public Service Employment Act, and would preside over ministries which would eventually either become parts of new or existing departments or whose existence would be terminated.

[Mr. Drury.]

Ministers of state would be appointed to assist a departmental minister in the discharge of his responsibilities; receive powers, duties and functions; be limited in number by the appropriations that Parliament is willing to pass to cover their salaries and expenses; and receive the same salary as a minister without portfolio provided for them in the estimates of the minister with whom they were to be associated. Finally, ministers without portfolio would have responsibilities assigned by the prime minister, and would not normally exercise statutory powers, duties and functions.

We do not believe, of course, that the provisions of the ministries and ministers of state act will provide the best of all possible worlds, but we do believe that they constitute a solid and most important advance. In designing them, we have tried to adhere to the genius of our system of government. We have not thought it wise to try to recast completely the ministerial system. Neither have we felt it wise to open up the increasingly obvious distinction among departmental ministers, that is, the distinction between those concerned primarily with operations, those concerned primarily with policy, and those concerned primarily with control. These are all products of history as well as of reason.

Decision making is, after all, a political as well as an administrative process. Whereas logic and measurement can certainly be promoted to high place in considering the administrative process, one should think twice before putting them in a position of dominance over the hundreds of years of history from which we have distilled the experience with human nature which is, in so many ways, the essence of our political process.

It will be said by some that the ministries and ministers of state act will significantly enlarge the administration. Particularly will this be the complaint when the House deals with part V of the government organization bill, which is an amendment to the Parliamentary Secretaries Act. We would not at all accept this allegation, Mr. Speaker. After the government organization bill has passed, statutory offices would exist for 26 departmental ministers in addition to the Prime Minister and the President of the Privy Council. There would be provision for the appointment of not more than five Ministers of State for designated purposes, and subject to the requirements of the Crown and Parliament's agreement to appropriate the necessary moneys, it would be possible to name a number of Ministers of State and Ministers without Portfolio.

● (4:40 p.m.)

The government does not envisage the appointment of all five of the Ministries of State, but it will ensure that the ministers, of all categories, and the Parliamentary Secretaries who may be appointed will be in a much better position than now to advise, develop and direct policy, and to control a government employment of half a million public servants.

In the last election there was a prevalent demand for greater sensitivity in government, to be accompanied at the same time by more government activity and less