

Government Organization

quote his words briefly, as reported in *Hansard* of that date at page 5429:

During the May 9 discussion preceding the introduction of the bill the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) suggested that it would be helpful in dealing with this legislation for each of the ministers concerned and affected to take part in the debate and in turn deal with that part of the legislation which directly affects his or her responsibility.

The following is the key statement:

It is the government's intention to follow that procedure. The ministers who are concerned with this reorganization will be present to make statements and answer questions in respect of those matters which have been or are now being transferred to their responsibility. It may be that this could be done during second reading, but it may be found that it would be more effective to do it at the committee stage when the bill will be considered section by section, because each section will deal with particular ministerial responsibilities and the appropriate minister could handle that section.

What I am really proposing here in support of the minister's proposal is that we let this matter stand and consider the other parts of the bill. I think we should do so for two reasons to give the government plenty of time to draft an amendment in conformity with the suggestions of the hon. member for Kamloops and to defer consideration of at least one part so that we can put questions to the new minister.

During the past three months I have informed the minister about the questions I wish to ask, and if we could now consider the rest of the bill we would then have an opportunity of hearing the minister answer those questions. I think we should accept the minister's proposal and let this clause stand.

• (5:40 p.m.)

Mr. Olson: Mr. Chairman, just before the amendment is withdrawn, if it is to be withdrawn, and the new amendment is presented to the committee by the government, there are one or two suggestions I should like to make. First of all, I think we need a great deal more information respecting the purpose that this amendment or an amendment to clause 31 is designed to achieve.

I have no disagreement whatever with vigorous plans and programs in co-operation with the provinces for dealing with water pollution and so on. But what is in the amendment does not deal specifically with water resources. I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that if this amendment is to have any operative effect it must certainly be confined to the words, "the minister may formulate plans for

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the conservation, development and use of the resources of Canada."

If the purpose is to grant to the federal government, by means of a clause in this bill, higher or prior authority over that of the provinces in dealing with the formulating of plans for the development of resources in Canada, I am not in favour of that kind of legislation. I think there needs to be a great deal more co-operation and, what is more, more active ways and means must be found of setting programs in action in so far as water pollution is concerned. But there is nowhere in clause 29, the amendment proposed to clause 29, or for that matter in clause 31 dealing with the new section 8A, anything that confines this matter to water resources. If it is to include other resources I think there will be a very serious constitutional problem in this respect. Even if it is only for water resources it seems to me it is the wrong way of granting this superior authority to the federal government.

What I am saying is not intended to take anything away from the desirability of a higher level of co-operation and more active programming and planning. The Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources mentioned, I believe, that the conference of ministers was meeting in Winnipeg today and agreement had been reached between the prairie provinces and the federal government to co-operate in developing plans and programs for the Nelson River drainage basin. I have no objection to this and in fact I wholeheartedly support it. But we need some better explanation with regard to how this kind of amendment will effectively achieve what the hon. member for Kamloops and the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka claim it will achieve, because it is not confined to water resources.

In so far as paragraphs 3 and 4 of the proposed amendment are concerned, which call for co-operation with the provinces and the calling of conferences and so on, I think they are almost superfluous to the legislation because this is being done by the minister now. The proof of this is to be found in the example stated today. The minister said that agreement has already been reached with the three prairie provinces with respect to draining the enormous Nelson river basin. When the government comes in with a new amendment I think it ought to be fairly clear that if it is designed to give the federal government a superior authority in the matter of setting up plans and programs for the development