

Government Organization Act, 1970

to five ministries of state and the responsible minister, according to this bill, will be in charge of policy formulation and development. This is, of course, contrary to all tradition, since policy formulation has always been a Crown prerogative. When you read this bill, you begin to realize the arrogance of this government. You begin to realize its desire for dictatorial control of the whole machinery of government, without the necessity of coming to Parliament for sanction or agreement to its policies.

This is bureaucracy gone mad, Mr. Speaker. This is another way for the government to create another Information Canada without an Act and without reference to a House committee or without estimates. We have seen too much of this already. One example is the assumption by the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) of responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations of the Bilingual and Bicultural Commission without an Act giving him this authority.

I cannot help but wonder, and the people I represent cannot help but ask, why this government is seeking the power to create up to five more ministries of state. The government already has the power to name ministers without portfolios to be in charge of temporary problems. Why create new ministries? To this question there can be only one answer, for it is obvious that this government still believes that by building up a large bureaucracy in Ottawa, by expanding the establishment, by placing more and more people under its direct control, it can cure the economic ills of Canada. In holding this belief, the government is being very naïve, or stupid, or a bit of both. There is only one way to get our economy back on the rails and that is to give business and private enterprise a chance to show what it can do. By this I do not mean that the government should saddle an even greater load on the backs of Canadian businessmen by increasing the number of cabinet ministers and their aides.

● (4:10 p.m.)

There is nothing in this bill that will encourage further plant expansion or the risk-taking which businessmen are constantly being exhorted to take. In fact, more business investment is the first thing that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) and his colleagues have stated is the key to growth in our economy and in our employment opportunities. Yet, this is the last thing they seem to want to encourage. In fact, the present hodge-podge of programs, dictated by bureaucratic discretion and political power, is fragmenting rather than building faith in Canada's future among our businessmen and leading industrialists. This is not the way to restore faith or dynamic growth to our economy.

I still hold to the belief that the quickest, most effective and least inflationary way to relieve our present recession in which it has been plunged by this government would be through a cut in personal and corporate income taxes. Some economies at government level would also be helpful. One such move should be to cut down

[Mr. Crouse.]

rather than expand the present number of Cabinet Ministers. Anyone who reads the recommendation attached to this bill, unless he is blind, mute, or partisan, will agree that this bill does not really represent new organization of the Government of Canada but rather is an indication that Ottawa's bureaucracy is adrift in a fog, without the aid of a chart, or compass, or depth sounder to guide it. For these reasons, I cannot support this section of the bill when it comes up for a vote.

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry):

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today, Bill C-207, sets up a new department. It sets up a new Department of the Environment. This new department replaces the present Department of Fisheries and Forestry. It also brings a number of related services, branches, and divisions together to deal with pollution. These include wildlife from Indian Affairs and Northern Development, water from Energy, Mines and Resources, meteorology from Transport and the environmental health unit from National Health and Welfare.

Our new Federal Department of the Environment will be concerned with Canada's renewable resources. It will be concerned with wild, living things, resources like trees, fish and wildlife. It will also concern itself with their life support systems, other resources like air, water and soil. Taken together these living and life related resources make up a natural whole. They are interrelated. They are mutually self-sustaining. They must be managed and they must be guarded in a comprehensive way. They must be operated on a sustained yield basis, now and in the future.

Our new Department of the Environment has two common elements. One is living and the other is essential to life. One will deal with living organisms. The other will deal with their environments. Together, they constitute our earthly biosphere, and our earthly biosphere is very fragile indeed. Looked at from outer space our biosphere is thin to the point of vanishing. It is a thin envelope encircling this tiny planet of ours. Reaching a few thousand feet up our mountain sides into the air and dipping a few hundred feet down into the water, it sustains all the life we know. Yet it, too, has its deserts and its dead spots. So, the preservation of our biosphere, of which Canada makes up a very important part, must be of great concern to us all.

Our new Department of the Environment is a resource management department. But it differs, in one very important respect, from our other resource departments. It deals with the animate. It deals with the living. It deals with the renewable. It is primarily biological in its orientation. It puts the accent on quality rather than quantity. It must often be soft nosed, not hard nosed. It must put ecology ahead of economics whenever a choice has to be made between the two. However, ecology and economics are not always opposed. We can have economic growth and a healthy environment, too. But to have maximum economic growth and a sound environment will take a lot of doing. It will take a lot of monitoring, a lot of careful