

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

He went on to criticize the national Liberal party for being unresponsive to the problem of youth unemployment. If my hon. friends opposite will not listen to me, I hope they will at least heed one of the younger voices within their own party.

We in Canada are faced with the crucial and terrible issue of unemployment. This was emphasized by the president of the Young Liberals of Canada. We are at a time when it is obvious to the people of Canada, even if it is not obvious to this government, that the first priority must be to act promptly to help people, to help dissipate the uncertainty that exists, to act to restore confidence and, in short, to act to get the economy moving again. But what does the government do? It presents us with this kind of bill to restructure the organization of government.

● (8:40 p.m.)

Ever since this government came into power it has been telling us and the Canadian people that it is clearing the decks for action, that it has been clearing the decks for action. Ever since the election of 1968, it has been sweeping away the deadwood and getting itself organized. This is the government which talks about action and about preparing for action, but in terms of effective steps toward economic progress it never gets any further. I say that what needs to be reorganized is not so much the structure of government but, rather, the priorities of this government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stanfield:** The main problem this bill will solve for the government concerns the necessity for this or any other government in the future to come before Parliament with regard to any reorganization of Parliament or any change of parliamentary responsibility. Under the proposals contained in this bill there will no longer be any need to consult Parliament. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre emphasized this matter and referred to the emphasis the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) placed upon the need of the government to come before Parliament on questions of supply. Since I have been in this House, supply has been a farce.

Before the adoption of the recently changed rules even when we were in committee of the whole there was a limit, under the rules, in respect of supply and I observed very quickly that whereas in the legislature where I had been, a minister had to answer questions in order to get his estimates through the House, here a minister could answer a question if he chose but the embarrassing questions were never answered when time was up and supply was voted. So do not let the President of the Treasury Board try to suggest to us on this side of the House that supply will give members of the opposition or the people of the country any meaningful opportunity to check the vast powers the government is seeking in this legislation.

This bill will certainly make things much easier for hon. gentlemen opposite. But I would remind them that what this or any government does in terms of organiza-

[Mr. Stanfield.]

tion is not simply a matter of internal interest to them alone. Whatever measures governments take are of interest to Parliament and to the Canadian people. I am, therefore, totally opposed to any move that would lessen parliamentary supervision which, after all, is one of the major roles of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stanfield:** This government already has downgraded Parliament more than enough. I say it is time to cry halt, and we on this side of the House intend to do so. Even before this bill we saw on several occasions the contempt this government has for Parliament and for the people of Canada. The most recent example came to a head today when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made it perfectly clear that members of his cabinet, and not the least of them, last week abused the confidence of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Stanfield:** Last week the President of the Treasury Board and the Acting Prime Minister made statements in this House clearly intended to deny the existence of a secret \$2 million government program to hire unemployed Francophone students for the federal civil service. Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking at the moment of the desirability of such a program; I have already declared my support for the principle of attracting more French-speaking Canadians to the federal public service. But I must say I was shocked as I watched a replay of the interview with the President of the Treasury Board when he was first asked about this program and denied its existence or, at least, to be perfectly fair to him, said he could not believe any program would exist that would give any such preference.

I must say, Sir, as I said before, that I have some concern about any element of discrimination in such a program. However, what I am emphasizing tonight is not the substance of this program but the manner in which it was approached and the manner in which it was hidden. I am speaking of the methods used by the government to achieve this goal and the attempts of members of the cabinet to mislead the House.

**An hon. Member:** Shame!

**Mr. Stanfield:** I am not interested in verbal quibbling. I do not doubt there was a good deal of verbal cunning displayed last week by various members of the government. But whatever the cunning, whatever the mentally crossed fingers and whatever the intellectual acrobatics by ministers, members of this House and the people of this country were given to understand that all talk of a specific \$2 million program was false. That was the impression given, and I believe this was the impression the government or those speaking for the government at the time intended to be given.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister today, outside this House, said that in his review of last week's proceedings