

MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION COUNCIL

PROVISION FOR APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS, ADVISORY BOARDS, ETC.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration) moved the third reading of Bill No. C-150, to establish a Canada Manpower and Immigration Council.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, when this bill was considered some time ago in committee of the whole house attempts were made by the opposition to require that the council being established by the bill lay before parliament an annual report. This suggestion, which I think by the time my speech is finished will be proven to have ample precedent in Canadian as well as English practice, was rejected by the minister. Later in my speech, Mr. Speaker, I am going to move an amendment that the bill be sent back to committee of the whole for the purpose of inserting in it an extra clause requiring that an annual report be made to parliament by this council. However, I hope it will not be necessary for me to move the amendment. I hope the minister will indicate that he and the government have changed their minds and will accept some form of reporting on the part of this important council to the house as a whole.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I must give the minister and the government marks for the fact that this council and the various boards established under the legislation will mean in effect the participation of many citizens, perhaps hundreds of citizens, in a very important field of government. These citizens will be able to give to the minister and his department, and I hope to parliament, their suggestions and advice on matters pertaining to manpower and immigration. I therefore hope that my hon. friend the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) will accede to what I think is a pretty reasonable request by members on this side of the house and will take the initiative to implement my suggestion, in which case I will not have to move my amendment.

Before I cite some 50 to 75 examples of exactly how various corporations, boards, commissions and other statutory bodies established by parliament make their reports, I should like to make one very brief observation and then raise some questions which I hope the minister will answer. I realize that at this stage unanimous consent would have to be given the minister to answer, but I hope the house will do exactly that.

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Manpower and Immigration Council

Since the bill received committee study, Mr. Speaker, there have been several significant developments. The bureau of statistics has reported that in the one year period between October of last year and October this year there has been a very sharp increase in unemployment. In recent days this was brought home drastically to us when the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways laid off large numbers of their workers across the country. Initially the number was 4,000, but if the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) is looking into the right crystal ball the number may be in the neighbourhood of 10,000, the figure he mentioned in the house the other day.

This situation poses important problems for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and for the policies being pursued by the government. I also wish to ask 10 or 12 questions that I think should be answered at this time. For example, how much of this problem is caused by the lack of sales of wheat and coal in western Canada? How much of the problem is caused by technological change in Canada? How much of it is caused by our productivity problems?

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) said in a speech to the chamber of commerce in Quebec on November 8:

One of the reasons why our prices and costs have been increasing rapidly is that in recent years the increase in our productivity has not been satisfactory. This disappointing increase has not been due to insufficient demand nor is it the result of inadequate investment.

To my mind, the causes are deeper and more complex. They lie in the weaknesses of our system of education and training, and this is equally true of management and workers. They lie in the lack of manpower mobility; and in the need for greater specialization in our industrial structures. We must concentrate on those areas where we are strongest and our productivity is highest.

• (5:30 p.m.)

I suggest that the Minister of Manpower and Immigration knows that these are factors that make his duties more difficult. I also hope that the minister will call to the manpower and immigration council experts who will offer their advice as to how the government may overcome that problem which was so aptly delineated by the Minister of Finance.

My next question has to do with inflation. The governor of the Bank of Canada, Mr. Louis Rasminsky, spoke to the Canadian Club of Winnipeg on Wednesday, November