

Manpower and Immigration Council

● (9:00 p.m.)

I will speak very briefly to the motion if I may, Mr. Chairman. I think it is essential in our parliamentary process that in setting up creations such as that which is set up by this bill there be some connection between the parliament of Canada and the particular bodies that have been established. I have made that point before.

Second, Mr. Chairman, I think the minister need not fear this process because the action of these boards will help him to educate the public to our manpower and technological needs. It should not inhibit the members of the council, because even though there may be disagreements among the members themselves, what they present to the public is surely the consensus of their views.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Chairman, this is an amendment which, from every aspect, seems very reasonable and designed to protect the rights of parliament and democracy.

Prior to adopting such a resolution, I believe that we must try to see what effects will follow the proposed procedure.

First of all, there is that whole part of the report of the chairman of the council concerning finance; there is indeed much exaggeration. There is exaggeration because this report must be delivered by the minister here in the house. When the item of the estimates relating to the advisory boards is considered, the members will be able to get all information they wish, that is, for instance, how much someone has received as fees on travel expenses, the whole having been checked by the auditor general, according to the regular procedure of the house. Then, questions may be asked in the house and the minister will report. The chairman of the council, who is not a fulltime civil servant, will have to ask our department what expenses have been made, that is to say he will have to ask the department, in fact, to make his report to the House of Commons; this means that we keep control—for the boards are dependent upon the department, in short; they are integrated within the very structure of the department. So, I cannot see the necessity for this outside control since such control may be maintained from within.

In fact, we are trying now to subject the proposed council to the same requirements almost, as we have for the Economic Council of Canada, which is an independent body with power to spend money, which has its own budget and is not dependent on any

[Mr. McCleave.]

department. In that case, I well understand that a report may be required similar to the one this amendment seems to require from the chairman of the council.

All this part seems to guarantee the rights of supervision of the House of Commons but in fact it guarantees nothing at all and simply weighs down the legislation through a repetition or, if you prefer, it is an embarrassment through a duplicate procedure, since the same ends can be achieved by other means.

Now, this is a minor issue as far as I am concerned, but there is a major point, and I would like to deal with it for a few moments.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

[*English*]

Mr. Marchand: I think it is a very important point, Mr. Chairman, and I should like to be heard in the house on this.

Mr. Nielsen: Take half an hour.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marchand: These boards, as we know, are advisory bodies and they are also representative bodies, for people are sent by their association to take part in a certain way in the implementation of the legislation, as the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) said very well, or endeavoured to say, this morning.

Since I have myself been a member of those boards—I was appointed when the official opposition was in power—I worked with them and I can say that the atmosphere is not one of conflict or competition between management and the employees as that which pervades other organizations; each member is really making an effort to make sure that the legislation is implemented fully.

But as soon as those persons—especially the representatives of labour movements or of employers' or other associations—will become aware that their activities could be reported to the House of Commons, then the position and the character of the councils are changed, in that those people will feel compelled to take positions consistent with the requirements or the wishes of their own association.

[*English*]

Mr. Ricard: There are not now.

Mr. Marchand: What I am saying is very important, Mr. Chairman, and has nothing to do with what is going on behind me.