

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

its opportunity to pronounce upon the wisdom of such changes only when they are *fait accompli*. And this is done, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) tells us, in the name of increased ministerial accountability to Parliament.

I realize that the Prime Minister, through the governor in council, has always had this power but in recent years it has been somewhat limited by the device of government reorganization bills. I would suggest to hon. members that the section of the bill dealing with ministers of state is a step away from the kind of advance toward parliamentary control of ministers which previous government reorganization bills have represented.

In the minister's explanation of the idea of ministers of state there is a lengthy discussion of the ministerial system and how it has evolved. This portion of his speech was undoubtedly prepared by one of the professors in the Prime Minister's office. Let me say in passing to this anonymous person that if I were still teaching political science at a university and this section of the speech had been prepared as an essay, I would give him a mark of 60 per cent and send it back with the comment that jargon is no substitute for argument—"interface," indeed. The minister's discussion of the development of the ministry glosses over the key development. Any serious observer of parliamentary democracy in Canada, in Britain, in Australia or anywhere it is practised in the modern world, if asked to state the most important development in the system over the past half-century or more would without hesitation reply that there has been a consistent increase in the power of the executive, or cabinet, at the expense of legislatures.

This concentration of power is constantly being intensified. The process has now reached the point at which the cabinet's power in relation to that of the Prime Minister is going into eclipse. All modern commentators on the constitution make reference to this fact. Indeed, they place great emphasis upon it. Humphrey Berkley in his book "The Power of the Prime Minister" puts the case this way:

Those who think that British constitutional reform is basically about parliamentary procedure are attacking the problem at the circumference; the centre problem is about the power of the Prime Minister. I accept that we are now operating a presidential system: to do otherwise would be unrealistic. Let us concede the Prime Minister has presidential powers and equip ourselves with the necessary safeguards.

True, Mr. Berkley is speaking of the British Prime Minister, and true also he may be indulging in a bit of hyperbole. However, when one looks at the recent developments in Canada, the basing of election campaigns upon the image of a leader, the vast increase in the personal staff of the Prime Minister, the increase in the Prime Minister's power of patronage through the expanded cabinet system of parliamentary assistants, even further expanded in this bill, and the device of regional desks, one recognizes that, although perhaps overstating the case, Mr. Berkley is presenting a very real problem, one with which we shall have to come to grips sooner or later.

The growth of the power of the executive in the past could in no way be characterized as the result of nefari-

ous plots by successive generations of power-hungry men. In the past it could not. It is, in many ways, the natural outgrowth of demands being made upon the modern state and the strengthening of the party system. The rejection of the laissez faire system of government, the almost universal acceptance of the concept of the positive state, the disappearance of Sir John A. MacDonald's "loose fish", and the creation of cohesive, rigid voting blocks in Parliament have all produced this phenomenon of concentration of power in the hands of the executive.

To come back to the bill, surely if one were really concerned about the constantly expanding powers of the ministry and Parliament's decreasing control over it, one would devote one's efforts to strengthening Parliament through its committees and through services provided to private members, rather than to increasing the size of the ministry as this bill provides. In the case of this government, however, there has been a deliberate move toward concentrating power in the hands of the cabinet and the Prime Minister. I earlier described the deliberate steps they have taken and I will not go over them again.

• (8:10 p.m.)

Why is this being done? I suspect it is a function of the personality of the Prime Minister. Like most of us, he fears and mistrusts what he cannot understand. There is no doubt that he possesses a profound lack of sympathy for and virtually no understanding of Parliament. He can only find it in himself to trust the judgment of those who are directly dependent upon him for their positions, hence his increasing tendency to rely almost exclusively for advice upon his vastly expanded office staff.

The Prime Minister is slowly but surely strangling Parliament and discrediting it in the eyes of the public. If it finally dies and becomes a purely honorific part of the Constitution, as has the monarchy, it may have become so thoroughly discredited that few will mourn its passing. But when faced with the monolith with which the Prime Minister is replacing Parliament, many more Canadians than do already—and that number is substantial—will regret the day that the reins of government fell into the hands of an academic who understood neither the country, its people nor its institutions. He will be remembered as an amateur in the art of government who left behind as his monument a few changes to the Criminal Code, a divided country, an embalmed House of Commons, the memory of some titillated teeny-boppers and a few puzzled, well-padded English speaking professors who had fooled themselves into believing that change in a revolutionary social situation could be accomplished without pain.

**Mr. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale):** Mr. Speaker, rather than taking up the time of the House with political versions of the art of government, I welcome this opportunity to make some concrete remarks during the second reading stage of Bill C-207, known as Government Organization Act, 1970. The federal government is to be commended for bringing in this bill which, if enacted by the House of Commons, will better equip the government to develop and implement new policies to serve the needs

[Mr. Rowland.]