

*Establishment of New Departments*

but I suggest the purpose behind this measure is to strengthen the present administration.

The situation with regard to the Department of Justice is the most interesting of all. All that minister now has is the name. I presume he will be very effective in carrying out his duties because the government has taken away the whole essence of the Department of Justice. How can one have a Department of Justice with authority spread out all over the place?

I am very much impressed with the way the Solicitor General answers questions in the house and accepts his responsibility, but what do we now find the situation to be in that department? The Solicitor General has practically appropriated the major powers of the Department of Justice. All the Minister of Justice is going to have left is the prestige of the name. Apparently he is to look after legal matters in the Department of Justice. That looks all right on the face of it, but what legal matters come to the attention of the Minister of Justice? He is not in the position of having such things come to his attention because the law officers of the Crown look after these various things: The government had to keep him in the cabinet so it continued his title, realizing no doubt that it might be better to place his authority elsewhere.

The administrative changes mean nothing. With one or two exceptions they seem in large measure to be designed to enable the Prime Minister to take care of his commitments. Instead of cabinet posts being created in accordance with departmental needs they seem to have been created in accordance with the political needs of the government. The divided and subdivided powers of the Department of Justice can only result in indifferent administration and confusion. One can see today in Ottawa a lack of confidence on the part of professional civil servants who observe departments being splintered, severed and added to other departments for what has every appearance of being a political purpose on the part of the government. That is not good enough because administrative necessity is not met by conforming to political necessity.

Whenever questions are directed to the Minister of Labour answers are given, as is the case in respect of questions directed to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, in keeping with the responsibilities of the government. However, certain

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

powers are to be taken from that hon. gentleman and I have already mentioned some of those in connection with the proposed changes in the Department of Labour.

● (5:20 p.m.)

What about agriculture? We cannot discuss that because it is not even before us. But we were told in advance, months ago, what was going to be done. They had to give something to the Minister of Forestry. When we set up the Department of Forestry it was ridiculed and laughed at. They had to give the Minister of Forestry something to give him prestige. What is the use of being a reformer without prestige? But what a position for a minister to be in—forgotten, only remembered for what he has done. I hope this situation will be corrected at the earliest possible date so that our uncertainty and concern will be obliterated.

May I say that if ARDA has been included in the responsibilities of the Minister of Forestry it would have meant and will mean that agriculture is being placed in a secondary position. When I mentioned this a while ago I noticed one of the ministers indicating disapproval, so I shall read from the *Family Herald*, a magazine nationally and internationally known, what is said on the question of the alteration in portfolio responsibilities:

We were disappointed that there has yet been no indication as to how these all-embracing portfolios will be dovetailed with the existing ministries which cover rural development and agriculture. For despite the reverse title there appears to be no apparent change in Mr. Sauvé's responsibilities. And we cannot help but feel that the ministry of agriculture has been relegated to a secondary status, comprising the ill-defined policies under the direction of a little-known minister.

Agriculture is placed in a secondary position. Why? The Prime Minister when he was leader of the opposition said, "We have to have two ministers of agriculture, a western minister and an eastern minister." One of the ministers had already appropriated to himself the position of eastern minister of agriculture but he never got the portfolio because it was not set up. Agriculture, as the *Family Herald* says, is relegated to a secondary position.

What reforms are there? There is a Treasury Board minister. That is a forward step and a necessary one. But you have agriculture placed in a tertiary position. It is not even included in the resolution. They have forgotten about it altogether in this resolution which took a long time for a government that was most careful in assuring that everything would be included to prepare.