

*Judges Act*

survival. I was quite interested a few minutes ago, to hear a comment voiced by a member of the New Democratic party who said that justice should be accessible to all whatever their social rank, their economic status and especially to those less fortunate economically. I agree with this concept. Justice must be available to all.

Nowadays, the administration of justice is directly proportional to the money involved and the property at stake. This is inconceivable and I would like the minister to consider this problem. It is often said that justice should at no time be related to a person's economic standing.

The Minister of Justice has already made several speeches proposing a judicial reform which would include the provision of legal aid to the needy. I should like to tell the minister that we support him completely in this and that we insist that he take steps quickly to carry this suggestion into effect.

Mr. Speaker, the Glassco commission suggested that the government give careful and thorough consideration to the matter and introduce clearly defined legislation on administrative tribunals. This legislation, which I am asking the minister to table as soon as possible, would aim at giving effect to the recommendations of the Glassco commission concerning administrative tribunals, for the government is not discharging its responsibilities at the present time. Therefore it is the responsibility of the members of the opposition to study this subject, so that the rights of the individuals may be respected.

Mr. Speaker, I said that this motion implements the recommendations of the Glassco commission and I want to quote a few for the benefit of the honourable members of this house because I think that it is worth-while:

The administrative tribunals of the federal government have never, to the knowledge of your Commissioners, been the subject of systematic study. Nor does there exist a definition of what bodies should be considered under this heading... There are widespread differences in the procedures followed by the tribunals, either as a result of differing statutory requirements or because of decisions taken by the boards themselves. No uniformity or consistency of principle was observed among them in respect of such matters as the obtaining of evidence and its disclosure to interested parties, the examination of petitioners and witnesses, the publicity to hearings and other proceedings, and the form and publications of decisions, rulings or reports.

And that is serious, Mr. Speaker.

I continue:

Generally, your commissioners—

[Mr. Fortin.]

The commissioners of the Glassco Commission

—have been struck by the lack of uniformity that is characteristic of the legal status, the composition and the procedures of such courts. They have noticed that these questions have been very much discussed for 30 years or so, that they were the subject of inquiries in the United Kingdom as well as in the United States, and that the legislator has tried to give uniformity to the principles on which the commissions are based as well as their constitution and their procedures. Nothing similar has been done in Canada and, after some observations by the commissioners in this important field, a comprehensive inquiry would be necessary.

I have been quoting from pages 72 to 75, volume 5, of the 24th report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization.

Mr. Speaker, that recommendation was made in 1963 and since then absolutely nothing has been done in that regard. In view of the inertia of the government when it comes to defending the rights of the citizens, we have to take the initiative.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that other countries have acted long ago in that field. France, for instance, has a highly developed system of administrative courts. In England, the British government set up a royal commission which reported in 1932 and its report is known as the Report of the Lord Chancellor's Committee on Minister's Powers. The Frank committee, set up in 1955, submitted its report in 1957. It is known as the Report of the Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Inquiries. It resulted in the creation in 1958 of a permanent body to supervise administrative tribunals which is called the Council on Tribunals.

I will not bore the house by reading the whole document, but one could go on and on giving further examples of what is being done in other countries as far as this important problem is concerned. I think that the implementation of a clear and specific legislation concerning administrative courts could easily and happily come within the judicial reform contemplated by the minister. We have a great deal to do in that field and it is time we assumed our responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say something else. In a way, justice must have all the time needed to make sure that its decision is valid. However, because of the dilatoriness of our institutions, the settlement of a case should not be delayed, since that is inevitably prejudicial to both parties. Justice must be cautious and efficient at the same time, and in that connection, I support the hon. member for