

Supply—Industry

directions is limited; I will go as far as I can but then you will have to talk to someone else. I suggest to the minister that he seriously consider appointing industrial commissioners or industrial ombudsmen for the various departments. They would be people whose purpose it would be to help an industrialist find his way through a great and complex organization, with all the conflicting purposes which exist there.

Such a suggestion has great possibilities in my opinion. The problems encountered by an industrialist might involve the excise branch or the Department of Finance. Instead of directing their caller to someone else the officials of the department could take him straight through. The complexity of government will not decrease over the years; it will become greater. This is in the nature of things and it is idle to deplore it. Correspondingly there is a growing need to help those who come to the department for assistance.

The department, seems to me, lacks information. When the minister indicated in his statement all the things his department hopes and intends to do, considerable doubt arose in my mind whether he would ever be able to accomplish even a fraction of those intentions. I say this because he does not seem to have at his disposal information on economic facts sufficient to enable him to act effectively. Research being done in this field is insufficient to produce the information upon which correct decisions can be made. I suggest that instead of congratulating himself on the small size of his staff, on keeping his staff to a small, fighting force, the minister should enlarge his staff particularly in the area of research.

Many of the difficulties connected with the area development program arose because there was insufficient understanding of its implications. When I read reports from various provinces and see how completely they have been ignored, I wonder sometimes whether it is not readers of reports who are needed rather than research staff. But whatever is required in this field should be undertaken in order to ensure that some of the worst features we have seen in the past arising out of decisions made on the basis of inadequate knowledge shall not be repeated in the future.

I hope the government will at some time bring these estimates before the appropriate committee. There does not seem to be any great pressure on the minister to do so on

this occasion. I cannot recall the estimates of the department undergoing a thorough scrutiny. Often they have been brought in at the last minute. The minister has asked the committee to get them through quickly and the committee has usually been accommodating in this regard. The department has undertaken a large number of projects and for this reason I believe the time has come for its estimates to be submitted to a fuller scrutiny than is possible now. I hope they will go before a committee next time.

Mr. Faulkner: Mr. Chairman, I intend to deal briefly with one subject. I hope the relationship between it and the estimates of the Department of Industry will be seen, for I admit it is not absolutely clear.

I listened carefully to the remarks of the hon. member for Waterloo South. I was surprised to find him, a member of the New Democratic party, being so critical of the area development program and in particular of the criteria used. I fail to see how any area development program can operate if the criterion of employment levels is not a major one in any determination of which areas should benefit.

The hon. member would like to substitute another criterion, which he calls "economic feasibility", without enlightening us as to exactly what he means by that term and without mentioning specific areas where presumably there has been economic infeasibility. This seems to be a most superficial approach to a program which has done a great deal of good.

As the hon. member must be well aware, there are some areas that do not participate in this program. Peterborough is one such area and I know our industrial commissioner has never been happy about its exclusion. Nevertheless he has never been able to persuade me or even himself that the criteria are wrong. That they are capable of refinement goes without saying. But I do not feel the criticism made by the hon. member was substantial. In my opinion it would be a mistake to separate this program from the employment criterion because employment is the very goal the program was designed to reach.

● (1:30 p.m.)

As to the next allegation that there is a lack of information or administrative confusion in the department, I must simply state for the record that my experience with the department has not been the same as that of