

templated by this legislation will be of general application and not open to individual discrimination. However, it might well be that his combination of age and service would make it possible for him to request the application of the early retirement provisions proposed in the previous section of this bill. This would also be possible.

Finally, I should like to deal with a point made by some hon. members, more particularly by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who argued that the passage of this bill would represent the final abdication of control by Parliament over the executive. I suggest that perhaps this is rather too apocalyptic in view of what is a sensible bill. The hon. member has failed to take into account the real essence of what really should be parliamentary control. It should be based on knowledge and on ability to apply knowledge as a process of control, rather than merely a dead hand based or founded on ignorance. To meet this objective the government has proposed a number of measures that are designed specifically to place in the hands of Parliament more knowledge and information than has ever been the case in the past. There has been provided to Parliament—I think the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre agreed with this—a new and much more illuminating form of estimates, so that now out of the estimates it is possible to get information whereas in the past one merely got a series of numbers.

There has also been provided to both sides of the House sources of research for the provision of more knowledge and information to members. I think all hon. members will agree that this is a step in the right direction. But acknowledgement should be had of these steps when setting them against endeavours on the part of the government to increase its accountability to Parliament; and it is in terms of accountability that real, effective control can be exercised.

There is one further point I should deal with, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre expressed the view that with the disappearance of the committee of supply, control over the estimates was thereby effectively lost. I have had some experience in committee of supply, and it was quite clear that this was a control based not on knowledge or intelligence but on an erosion of the respective wills of members on either side of the House. With a system for reference of adequate estimates for study in detail to a much greater extent than is possible in an examination of estimates in the Nova Scotia Legislature for instance, I think we have enhanced and will continue to enhance the kind of framework in which Members of Parliament and Parliament itself, through knowledge, can establish effective control over the executive. This is the kind of control which is needed, desirable and appropriate. It will be control based on knowledge and real information rather than on cumbersome procedures which merely delay rather than control.

● (9:40 p.m.)

I hope hon. members will recognize the steps which have been taken and accept the fact that the govern-

*Government Organization Act, 1970*  
ment will welcome, as I have indicated, further steps in this direction.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister a question about one of the fundamental points I raised yesterday, with which he has failed to deal. It relates to the ability of the Governor in Council to transfer funds allocated in an appropriation bill for a certain purpose to another function, such as a ministry of state. This apparently may be done by order in council. I have in mind the effects of clause 16.

Can the minister tell me what effective control Parliament will have, having in mind knowledge of order in council and what can be done by Parliament? Will he explain how he can reconcile this attempt to transfer funds, if that is to be the case, with the requirements and regulations contained in the BNA Act, the Financial Administration Act and appropriation bills?

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how to get around the BNA Act, the Financial Administration Act or appropriation bills.

**An hon. Member:** You just don't know how to get around much any more.

**Mr. Drury:** The government is not proposing a technique to do this. The hon. gentleman who asked the question is aware of the existence and operation of the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act. I think he will find that clause 16 provides no greater extension of powers than is contained in that act, and we have lived with it for many years.

In so far as the transfer of funds is concerned, Parliament does appropriate moneys for specific purposes and programs, and the executive does not have the right, nor does it seek it, without the approval of Parliament to transfer funds voted for one program to another program. In view of the act to which I have just referred, all clause 16 will allow is that the agency administering or directing the program may be transferred from the authority of one minister to another. The purpose for which the money has been voted cannot be changed without subsequent authority of Parliament.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** I have a further question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The minister still has some time left. I do not want to prevent hon. members asking questions, but I respectfully point out that such questions might appropriately be asked at the next stage of our proceedings. However, I will recognize the hon. member for Edmonton West.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** With the greatest deference, Your Honour, I think an hon. member should be allowed to decide whether a question is appropriate at this or at the next stage.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!