

*Establishment of New Departments*

country. I personally approve, generally speaking, of what is being done and I am certainly in favour of the principle involved of better planning, co-operation and co-ordination at the federal level.

I do not know that we can judge exactly at this point how efficiently some of these new departments or new groupings will work. I feel that we will have to withhold our judgment until we see the new machinery in operation.

● (7:00 p.m.)

The other proposals commend themselves to me immediately, particularly those concerned with citizenship and manpower, the grouping of energy and mines and so on in one department. I want to say, though, that while I approve of the objective I do believe it has taken a long time to make this attempt. We are seeing an effort to reform something which has been in need of reform for many, many years. All of us have had the experience of dealing with two or three or more departments of this government, in addition to having provincial agencies involved and realizing that the matter could be settled very quickly if there were a co-ordinating agency.

I note that the Auditor General of Canada, in his recent report, was at pains I thought to underline the need for further reforms in organization procedures of the federal government. He said this, Mr. Chairman:

We selected 32 departments or agencies of government whose operations had been studied by the royal commission three years ago and where the conditions giving rise to some 450 findings existed.

I break off the quotation there to explain that these findings represented items which the royal commission listed as being defective or, wasteful procedures and practices by the federal government. The Auditor General states that his survey involved seeking answers to over 900 questions at the appropriate levels of government departments and agencies, questions which could be summed up briefly by saying that he was seeking to find out from them what they had done about the many recommendations for reforms made by the royal commission. The results of these questions, the Auditor General says, brought forward this sorry state of affairs, one which I believe still exists to this day. In brief, three quarters of the recommendations by this royal commission, which incidentally cost the country \$3 million, had been ignored to date by the different levels of government or agencies.

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I think it is incumbent upon every member of the house, Mr. Chairman, to do what he can to encourage the government to go further than they have toward streamlining government operations and making more efficient the operations of the departments. As a social democrat, I have been long acquainted with the overlapping and duplication which is evident in private industry. As a social democrat, I am very much concerned also that public enterprise, as represented by the federal government at least, should seek to eliminate wasteful procedures and present an efficient, competent operation.

The cost of that royal commission, as I said, was \$3 million. In my view it did excellent work. The Auditor General states that the task the commission undertook is far from complete. He found no lack of awareness in the departments of government which he questioned as to the need for the many reforms dealt with in the report of the commission. In many instances he found that there was a lack of action in the top management bracket to have these reforms undertaken. This is what interested me, Mr. Chairman: He found that top management itself, in many cases, said that they could do very little to change the practices and procedures which were under criticism in their departments because they had their beginning in actions by the Canadian parliament itself.

I feel therefore it comes back pretty well to us, certainly to the government and to the members of this house, to do whatever we can to continue to eliminate or reduce waste and duplication in the service. With this in mind, while I favour the general proposals which have been put forward by the government, I regret that I have not heard of the government's intention of continuing with this reorganization. We have had no indication from the government that it intends to do what any private industry would do, that is conduct a continuing survey on an annual basis to ascertain how and where more efficiency can be introduced. I support the remarks made earlier today by my leader who said he thought there should be a federal agency which would concern itself solely with improving the efficiency of the government. For many years, Mr. Chairman, in the field of municipalities we have had a municipal manager. It may be the time will come when we will have something in the nature of a federal manager.