

Government Organization Act, 1970

is his prime purpose to refer the subject matter of the bill in order that they may be dealt with elsewhere? I think it is clear, not just from the way the hon. member spoke but from the wording of his amendment, that he is not seeking to divide the bill. We accepted Your Honour's ruling earlier that that cannot be done. The primary purpose of this amendment is to refer the subject matter of the bill to extensions of this House, to appropriate committees which could deal with these various propositions.

Your Honour, in your remarks earlier today, admitted there were many different propositions, if not principles, in this bill and you sympathized with our complaint about having to deal with it in omnibus form. We have accepted the ruling you made that it is one bill and cannot be divided. However, I would argue that this amendment should not be thrown out on the ground that it is an attempt to divide the bill, because I do not think that is what it is. I believe it should be accepted as a straightforward attempt to have the subject matter of the bill referred to committees which could appropriately study its various portions. I would hope that Your Honour's ruling would be in favour of the amendment.

● (8:40 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for his contribution. The time he took to express his views regarding the procedural point raised by the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) has given me a little more time to think about the matter and has convinced me further that the amendment is not procedurally in order. I am not suggesting this is an indirect attempt to divide the bill and that the amendment should be rejected on that basis. At the same time, I am not accepting the suggestion of the hon. member that this should be accepted as a reasoned amendment. It is not a reasoned amendment. It is largely a deviation or a change from the old-established form of amendment which provides that the subject matter of a bill or a motion before the House be referred to a special committee or a standing committee.

What I believe is objectionable from a procedural standpoint in connection with the proposed amendment is that it goes into the details of the bill. I suggest that this cannot be done in the form of an amendment to refer the bill before the House, which is for second reading, to different entities or different bodies. There is more to the matter than determining the body to which the subject matter is to be referred. I fully agree with the suggestion made by hon. members that the committees to which it is proposed to refer the several parts of the bill do exist; but as I have said, there is more to the point than that.

My difficulty in accepting the hon. member's proposed motion is that it goes behind the bill and seeks to touch the different parts of the bill by way of an amendment which normally should not be put forward in this form. The hon. member, in the course of this long debate—I assume it will not finish tonight or tomorrow and that we will be considering the bill for some time—may have an opportunity, with the assistance of some of his colleagues, to propose an amendment which would be more procedurally acceptable to the Chair.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the legislation now before the House is such a mixed bag that one cannot do more than touch on some aspects of it in an opening speech. Some of my colleagues, however, will deal with specific sections of the legislation and in committee of the whole we will be in a position to deal with it in more detail.

Since this bill is in the name of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) I expected the right hon. gentleman would have been here to introduce it, or that it would have been left until he was here at which time he would have indicated the main thrust of government policies inherent in government reorganization. The fact that the bill has been introduced by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury), not the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Sharp), the House leader and certainly not the Prime Minister himself, indicates to my mind that either this bill is largely window-dressing or that its real purpose is to provide for changes in superannuation for senior civil servants. I hope that before this legislation is disposed of at this stage of the debate, the Prime Minister—who will probably have returned by that time—will have entered the debate to outline the government's rationale behind the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, if government reorganization is to be of any value it should have a specific purpose with clearly defined objectives. I listened in vain this afternoon to the statement of the President of the Treasury Board for some statement of purpose. There was no delineation of the government's goals and objectives in the statement made by the minister. The fact is that the government is obsessed with the means rather than the ends. Canada today is being led by technocrats, when it needs statesmen. The government is like a giant machine with a weak motor; they keep adding pulleys and belts which only add to the burden of an already overworked motor.

The government is obsessed with administrative procedures because it lacks any clearcut objectives. A mere reshuffling of responsibilities among various ministers and the moving of certain responsibilities from one department to another will not guarantee results unless there are clearcut policies to be enunciated, and we have heard none today. Efficient government administration of course is essential, but administration is only a tool which is designed to bring about clearcut results. Without goals, administration becomes merely a bureaucratic nightmare.

The government loves this technocratic jargon about input and output, but the fact is that the input has been fuzzy and the output has consisted mainly of rhetoric contained in white papers and in ignored reports of parliamentary committees. Bureaucratic rhetoric and technocratic jargon are no substitute for clearly stated policies and specifically defined objectives. This legislation, like so much of the government's activities, is designed to give the impression of movement while standing still. The Prime Minister has become the great illusionist. The public are invited to see the action and be where the action is, whether it is riding elephants or modelling the latest fashion in sartorial elegance. In the meantime, the ship of state is going nowhere and never