

Establishment of New Departments

This system would work two ways. First, all the directions could go down through it, from the Prime Minister and the cabinet to the ministers. All ministers would get directions flowing the same way and they would be working on the same wavelength. Vice versa, a flow of information and ideas could go back up through it, covering suggestions coming from one group of ministers, or from an individual minister if the group agreed to his suggestions, and then these could be fitted into the over-all policies. It would also obviate long debates in cabinet to explain a very technical matter to a group of people who have not had time to learn about it in their own departments.

The second reason for suggesting this person to co-ordinate and correlate the work is a simple, single word, and that word is dynamics. I am sure ministers know what I am talking about. One minister works hard at producing an idea. He gets it to the stage where it can receive cabinet discussion and direction. It is then put in the hands of the Privy Council, or some other department, but the idea drops there, and stays dormant because the person who has direction of the idea is not the one who is pushing it forward.

Without trying to single out any particular minister, I quote the legislation called ARDA. This legislation took a long time to develop, a long time to sell not only across the country but to one's colleagues, because the legislation is a very technical type of approach to a problem. Then when the government changes there is a long hiatus before one catches any indication that any minister in the new government is beginning to understand what one has been trying to do.

I want to pay my respects to the present minister because, after a long year of waiting, I was glad to see the intellectual power he turned loose on this legislation, and I helped to do whatever I could, not because I am a supporter of his but because I thought it was an idea that was worth pushing. But I know there was a gap of a year or two before a decision was made as to who was going to take it over. I could not tell whether it was going to be under agriculture or under the new Department of Forestry. To people at the low level of income that gap was a period of long, painful waiting. Therefore we missed about two years of forward motion, something which is not fatal, but to the people engaged in that wait it was a desperately long time.

[Mr. Hamilton.]

So, the word is dynamics. You have to know, to understand and want something to make it work. This can only be when you have someone correlating your work, when you know someone is not cutting it off, and stymieing it, because of lack of understanding or appreciation. Once you have cleared the idea with a group of ministers, once the cabinet has accepted it and you know that there is somebody pushing it, then you can expect progress.

I think I have made my points clear enough. I had hoped to speak on manpower. I had hoped to suggest that manpower should really be one department with an associate minister. I wanted to speak on energy, mines and resources, because these were my first interest. I had many things I thought I would say. I also wanted to speak on forestry. I may get the opportunity to do so during discussion at later stages of the legislation to be brought forward.

In closing I want to support the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka in his plea that some time during debate on second reading, when the duties of the ministers are before the house, the ministers who are going to take over these departments will give the house and the country some indication of where they stand and what they are going to do so that we, to make our criticism helpful, can concentrate it on a definite proposal. It can only be concentrated, successful and positive if we have statements from the ministers. I appeal to the government, when second reading is reached, to have the ministers concerned give us clear statements on what their duties will be and what their philosophies are, so that we can concentrate our criticism on those subjects.

I know it was a politically smart idea to bring all these departments into one resolution, but the only chance we shall have to put our best ideas forward is to have the new ministers make statements, so that we can focus our attention on those statements.

Mr. Pickersgill: Did I understand the hon. gentleman to suggest that this afternoon the Prime Minister said Treasury Board was to be under the Privy Council Office?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, I said that because I heard the Prime Minister say it, and my understanding of the resolution was that there was going to be a sort of president, or almost a minister. When I heard the Prime Minister's statement I was waiting for amplification of it.