

Government Organization

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, I think it was the agreement that we would proceed on to clause 70 under Part IX.

The Deputy Chairman: I am informed that that part of the bill was carried on March 13.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Which part?

The Deputy Chairman: Parts IX, and X, clauses 70 to 94.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I am sure there is some confusion. I was here through the whole of March 13.

The Deputy Chairman: We will try to do some deeper research and inform the hon. member later.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I point out that we are supposed to take a bill clause by clause in consecutive order unless there is some other arrangement, and I submit that no other arrangement was made with respect to Part IX. We did switch the order a bit after we finished the part on Supply and Services last Thursday. We went to the Royal Canadian Mint but we did not deal with the Science Council of Canada. We went from Supply and Services to the Mint. Then we came back to Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Then we had the National Health and Welfare section. That is what we did on Thursday, March 13.

The Deputy Chairman: I wish to apologize to hon. members, who are right on this point. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has said, we switched, and I was present when we switched to clause 71. We are now on Part IX, the Science Council of Canada, clause 70.

On clause 70—*Establishment and constitution.*

Mr. Aiken: Mr. Chairman, I merely wish to ask the minister whether he intends to make any statement on this clause. If he wishes to answer questions at the end of the discussion that would be satisfactory.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, as it is the hope that we will complete the balance of the bill, other than the part dealing with regional development, by six o'clock, I do not want to get into the position of talking the bill out and therefore I will try to answer questions.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Chairman, the government, after nearly a year in office, has presented no clear statement of objectives and priorities for the nation. As a result public policy in all areas is haphazard and ad hoc. In short, it is completely inadequate. Nowhere is this process more evident than in the general area of public policy for science and technology.

At present there is tremendous disillusionment, especially in the scientific community, concerning the lack of government direction and co-ordination for fresh and new approaches in the development of science and technology in Canada. This stems from the following unpalatable facts. First of all, there was a series of cancellations in the scientific area, beginning with the cancellation of HARP, the McGill University high altitude research program. It was cancelled in 1966 without any adequate reasons being presented to the Canadian people. The aim of the project was related to an attempt to orbit satellites in space by using large cannon. The project received wide recognition for its simplicity as a scientific principle throughout the advanced world. Following its cancellation it was taken over by a number of American firms and financed by the United States government. At present it gives every indication of being a very successful scientific endeavour.

Second was the cancellation of the intense neutron generator program of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. Given other priorities, including a greater emphasis on industrial applied research and development rather than basic research, this may have been the right decision. However, the point is that once again there are no publicly available reasons for justification of the decision. The only reason given for the cancellation of the ING program is that it is considered to be too expensive. When the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced cancellation of this program he referred to its relationship on the priority scale to the very many other demands on the national treasury. I ask, what scale of priorities? No one has told us. In fact there is no indication that the decision had any place in an over-all program of scientific priorities or that the money saved here would go toward some other project. Dr. W. G. Schneider, President of the National Research Council, has stated:

● (4:40 p.m.)

There may be sound reasons but, if so, the public has a right to know; I feel when decisions of this