

*National Defence*

research council. The national research council can inaugurate research without reference to the governor in council but with the authority of the Minister of Trade and Commerce to whom it reports. The national research council is a most successful organization. It has operated very well and has never given cause for anything but congratulation and praise. In setting up the defence research board we followed closely the general set-up of the research council. We have set out here the constitution of the defence research board. In subsection 2 of section 53 the members of the defence research board are named and include the president of the national research council and representatives of universities, industries and other research interests. Our thought was that the defence research board would have powers corresponding roughly to those of the national research council, and that they would use the moneys made available by parliament for defence research in the way they thought desirable, but subject to the approval of the minister.

I can assure the committee that I have of course checked every recommendation they have made, and in major cases have secured the consent of the cabinet defence committee or of cabinet itself. I think the hon. member's proposal would unnecessarily hamstring the activities of the board and load cabinet with a great deal more work than would be justified by any results that would be obtained. I do not think the hon. member appreciates that we probably have in existence now somewhere between 500 and 600 contracts of this kind. Sums of money ranging from \$250 to \$50,000 a year are paid to virtually every university in Canada and a great number of industries to assist them, or an individual, to do some bit of defence research. To require that each one of those, or even any of them, should go to the cabinet would, I think, burden a body that is already pretty heavily burdened with an amount of detailed work which is greater than in any other country that I know of.

Of course somebody else should say this, but our experience is that it has worked very well indeed. I think you will find that other countries have regarded our set-up for defence research as being more desirable, more workable, and better controlled than theirs. It also has the advantage of being very closely tied in with other government activities and with the services.

**Mr. Gillis:** I listened to this argument in the special committee, and I have listened to it again now. Under the circumstances existing ten or twelve years ago I think perhaps the hon. member for Melfort would be absolutely right. There is a lot of merit in

[Mr. Claxton.]

the argument advanced by the minister. As things are now I think even this provision in the act is going to cause some shifts within the cabinet itself in matters of research. For example, the act provides that in the event of an emergency there can be set up army, air force and naval ministers. If that is so the powers delegated to the minister would then be delegated to the new ministers. I think the minister is in a better position than anyone else to know the requirements of the services. The governor in council is a rather abstract thing in the mind of most of us, and this would presuppose that the government as a whole was responsible. I would rather have somebody in this house that I could see, some minister, whether it was army, navy or air or a joint ministerial post such as the present minister holds. There should be somebody coming into the house who was responsible for the appropriations being asked for, for the contracts being made and so on.

I think for the purposes of administration and clarity in the minds of hon. members the arrangement provided by this section is the best. The governor in council leaves nothing but a blank in my mind. There is nothing you can fasten to. The buck can be passed in nineteen different directions.

Take the matter of defence research. Atomic energy research is definitely defence research, and will be for a long time. It will involve a lot of money. At the present time the Minister of Trade and Commerce is administering that particular research job. If it is continued as a matter of defence research I think that will have to be transferred to the Minister of National Defence to whom it rightly belongs. The same thing applies to the purchasing of stores and all that kind of thing. I notice there is a resolution on the order paper providing for powers to be given to the Minister of Trade and Commerce in this connection.

I am satisfied with the section as it is, and I say that with all due respect to my hon. friend. This indicates the flexibility of the C.C.F., how it is possible for us to have different problems. This may involve some shifts in the cabinet, but that would not be a bad thing.

**Mr. Wright:** I do not want the impression to go abroad that I think that every little piece of research should go to the governor in council, because that was not my intention. I was referring to major projects or the development of new weapons or new methods of warfare, which I consider are important enough to be dealt with by the governor in council rather than by the minister. I am sorry the hon. member for Cape Breton South thinks so little of our governor in