

*Government Organization*

Canadians with whom I had the opportunity to discuss the reorganization of the government, to keep pace with the needs of the atomic age in which we live in 1966. First and foremost, means should have been provided to relieve the Prime Minister. Regardless of his party, his health or his talents, it is impossible for any prime minister to cope with his task.

A trained personnel should then have been provided to relieve him of some responsibilities, to give him time to think, observe, meet people, get to know better the senior officials of the government and consult experts. Provision should have been taken to relieve him from attending all the sittings of the House of Commons, as it is done in other countries. This becomes a tedious task for a prime minister and takes up valuable time which he could devote to the general administration of the country.

The suggestion made by some members of the house concerning the creation of senior and junior ministers, should have been carried out at least in part. I do not maintain that my formula is perfect; I submit it merely as a suggestion. It is a perfectible formula. For the sake of discussion, I will explain it as briefly as possible.

There should be, standing by the Prime Minister, a group of senior ministers, let us say five, six or seven of them—it matters little how many—but senior ministers with perhaps more experience than the others, one of whom, at least, would be Acting Prime Minister on a permanent basis. The Prime Minister would then be replaced not only when he is away for a week or two on a trip by a minister who may not have the required experience to do so. There could then be a permanent, a statutory Acting Prime Minister, and the four or five other ministers could in turn fill this position.

These senior ministers would become so to speak, the board of directors of the government which, naturally, the twenty or so other ministers would join. They would plan the over-all policy in various fields. But these five or more senior ministers would constitute the board of directors, they would meet regularly with the Prime Minister and share his responsibilities.

Each of them could supervise and direct four or five different departments, or even six for that matter, which could be grouped, taking into account the similarity of responsibilities in each department. This would be

easy enough to determine, Mr. Speaker. Let us say, for instance, one group of departments dealt specifically with economic matters, another with, let us say, matters of control and administration, others with legal affairs, others with protection and defence, others with matters that might be called external affairs questions.

Finally, all these ministers or departments could be gathered around five or six various themes, and a senior minister could be given the responsibility. That is to say that five or six junior ministers would be responsible to a senior minister. And all those senior ministers would, of course, see to it that the Prime Minister is freed from all these responsibilities.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, let us say the departments that have to do with the Canadian economy would be grouped. Under economy one would find the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Trade and Commerce, the Department of Forestry, the Department of Industry, the Department of Manpower and the Department of Fisheries. All those departments seek to condition, to stimulate and to plan the economy of the country. Now, these departments are homogeneous. They have the same responsibilities.

It would be profitable if all these ministers met at a given time to deal more specifically with the economy of Canada. Then, there could be a senior minister in charge of this sector of the Canadian economy responsible to the Prime Minister and the Canadian people.

There could also be, let us say, legal affairs. Under this heading, might be grouped the Departments of Justice, the Registrar General, perhaps the Solicitor General and the Secretary of State. They might possibly be grouped around these things, even though sometimes common characteristics are not so close. As long as there is a similarity, they could perhaps be grouped. This distribution would not necessarily be followed, Mr. Speaker. It could be adjusted, but it is the principle which I wish to point out.

There could also be some matters concerning defence which would make up another group of departments. For example, National Defence, Defence Production, External Affairs which up to a point are related with matters of defence. It is at least a preventive defence in many cases; the Department of Veterans Affairs perhaps. And nobody would object if in those large departments, there were some associate ministers as at present.