

here for this part of the debate. If he cannot be here at this time, let us move on to another part of the bill until the Prime Minister can attend the committee and take part in the discussion.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. McCutcheon: Mr. Chairman, I trust I am correct in assuming that we are dealing with clause 14 in Part IV of the bill, which has to do with the appointment of ministries and ministers of state. As the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands has just said, the person who is responsible for explaining this part of the bill is the Prime Minister. At the moment the proceedings in the committee remind me very much of a group of children playing house. The President of the Treasury Board has not got a clue what the Prime Minister has in the back of his mind with regard to these new appointments. If he has, then perhaps he will rise in his place and tell the committee who are the appointees that the Prime Minister has in mind. Again I say, with no disrespect to the President of the Treasury Board, that the minister does not have a clue who is going to fill these places.

More important still than the actual bodies that will fill these places is the question why there are going to be filled and what the responsibilities of the appointees will be. The minister probably does not know even that. I support the suggestion of the previous speaker that this is too broad a clause for the committee to discuss unless we have before us an expert witness who can explain—

An hon. Member: What about Lloyd?

Mr. McCutcheon: Well, even he cannot specify the matters in relation to which ministers must formulate and develop policies. So, with great respect, Mr. Chairman, I strongly recommend to the committee that we stand this clause and move on to another part of the bill about which we can get some factual information from some responsible person on the other side of the House. Once more may I say I mean no offence to my good friend the President of the Treasury Board.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin: Mr. Chairman, I listened to the remarks of the leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Douglas) as well as those of the hon. member who spoke before him, and their arguments have seemed valid to me. When one reads Part IV of the bill under consideration, the first question which comes to mind is whether the increase in the number of Ministers of State, Ministers of State and parliamentary secretaries is justified.

That part of the bill tends to increase the number of ministries, and to appoint new Ministers of State, as well as parliamentary secretaries. Why? What will be the role of those ministries? For what purpose are they established? What will be the duties of the new Ministers of State and their salaries? Why appoint more Ministers of State? What justification is there for creating a chief executive officer's position?

Government Organization Act, 1970

Mr. Chairman, those are questions that we of the opposition are asking ourselves. If, to speed up our discussion, we attempt to refer to that same Part IV so as to find answers to questions which are essential ones—since they concern the expenditures of public funds—the only thing to do is to read section 21 entitled “Duties of Minister”. The duties of those ministers will be the following and I quote:

In addition to the powers, duties and functions specified in the proclamation establishing a Ministry of State, the powers, duties and functions of the Minister for that Ministry extend to and include such other matters as are assigned or transferred to the Minister or the Ministry by or pursuant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.

Mr. Chairman, that is extremely vague, it does not specify anything, does not justify anything.

Before ascribing intentions to the government, we would be grateful if it gave us, through the sponsor of this bill, a justification for Part IV, otherwise we will have to object at least to that part of the bill.

[English]

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, with reference to the point just made by the leader of my party with regard to this particular section of the bill, in view of the fact that just before we reached this Part we had been making very rapid progress and actually passed a complete Part of the bill—

Mr. Drury: One clause.

Mr. Barnett: —the complete Part III of the bill—and in view of the fact that it does not appear the Prime Minister is in the chamber, I am wondering whether this might not be the appropriate point for the committee to revert to Part II of the bill and deal with the matter raised in connection with the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Chairman, far be it from me to interfere with the smooth operations of this committee. If there is an opportunity for a decision to be rendered, I would be quite pleased to continue the next thrilling episode of my remarks at a later stage; but until that is the situation I will proceed with the few remarks I have to make on clauses 14 and 15.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Chairman, I do not want to interrupt the hon. member, but I still want to raise the question whether or not the Prime Minister is going to be here. We can discuss clause 14 and the hon. member can make his speech, but surely we ought to know from the President of the Treasury Board, who is piloting this section of the legislation through the committee of the whole, whether the Prime Minister will attend the committee at some stage when the committee is discussing both Part IV, which has to do with ministries and ministers of state, and Part V, which has to do with parliamentary secretaries.

I do not want to repeat what I said before but these are matters coming strictly within the purview of the Prime Minister of Canada. There is a very little value in our simply talking to ourselves in this committee; we should