

*Government Organization*

departments in the administration of government, having under its jurisdiction only the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act and a few other minor acts. Over the years, because of our activity in government, this department rose to a very important position and played a very important part in the government of the country, so much so that the personnel of the department felt they had now taken their rightful place in the administration of the country.

The Department of Labour plays a prominent part simply because labour is a very large and important segment of the Canadian population. Because of that the Department of Labour should and must play a significant role in the administration of the country, and it deserves recognition and attention.

When we were the government we built up the department through various programs and the administrative acts which were under the jurisdiction of the department. We activated and stimulated the "Do it Now" program. We activated the training and retraining of the unemployed in the country, which is something the new minister of manpower will be adding to because he has recognized its importance by raising the allowances of those who will be training under the program. We also activated a tremendous degree training and retraining in industry. This is something which I hope will be continued, though it will be carried on not by the Department of Labour but by the new department of manpower.

We also instituted the municipal winter works incentive program, which is still in effect. Under this program municipalities right across the country can benefit each and every winter. In 1960 we instituted the technical and vocational assistance program, under which a tremendous number of schools were built across the country providing over 300,000 places for students to receive training in trades and skills. All this added to the prestige of the department and the department felt it was playing an important part with tremendous enthusiasm.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the year 1966 this government is dismembering the department. All of the programs instituted since 1957 are being taken away from the department and it is being relegated to a very insignificant role indeed in the affairs of government in this country. The morale of the personnel left in the department is low and all interest has been lost. In 1957 they felt they were second cousins but they now feel they are

[Mr. Starr.]

third cousins to other departments in the government service.

As a result of this reorganization, Mr. Speaker, what is left to the Department of Labour? It still administers the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, under which it provides the services of mediation in disputes in this country. It still administers the Merchant Seamen Compensation Act, a purely administrative measure, and the Government Annuities Act which is now dormant.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, what has the Minister of Labour left for him now? What is the meaning now of the Department of Labour in relation to the tremendous labour force in this country? It has very little meaning. As a matter of fact, since 1963 the ministers of the present government have made no endeavour to bring about an end to any disputes which have occurred in the country during the past three years but have sat on the sidelines relying on mediators, conciliation boards or any other body on which they could lay their hands and throw into disputes, hoping and praying they would be successful. Such was not the case from 1957 till 1963 when there was an active interest on the part of the minister in endeavouring to bring parties together in order to bring an end to disputes instead of relying on somebody else.

Let me take as an example the present strike of longshoremen in Montreal and Trois-Rivières. The government is not moving on this at all. All they are doing is hoping and praying that a judge they have appointed will bring about an end to the strike through conciliation.

● (4:00 p.m.)

I bring up these matters, Mr. Speaker, only because I want to show that in the past three years the ministers have not accepted their administrative responsibilities. That is why I said at the beginning that it does not matter what changes are made through reorganization because the success of such reorganization will depend on leadership.

If the government and its ministers carry on in the same offhanded manner they have adopted until now, none of these proposed changes will mean anything. Reorganization is fine provided you have the leadership to put it into effect. The two ministers who have held the office of Minister of Labour over the past three years have not participated in disputes regardless of the disruption to the economy, regardless of the effects on the