

*Government Organization*

really waters down the functions of the council almost to the point of non-existence.

However, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put forward a couple of amendments. In order to have both of them before us before completing our consideration of clause 31, I will put them both at the same time. In this way the committee may get the sense of what I feel is important here in respect of some of the responsibilities, at least, to be exercised by the Atlantic Development Council. To clause 31 we propose the addition of new clause (c), to read as follows:

(c) appropriate opportunities for the co-ordination of policies and programs of the government of Canada, the provinces and other responsible bodies.

Subclause (c) would now become subclause (d) and would have the following words added:

or as in the opinion of the Council should be considered by it.

The sense of these two amendments is this. In the original subclauses (a), (b) and (c) the council is asked to make reports and recommendations to the minister on plans, programs and proposals, and the feasibility of particular programs. I think this is all well and good, and I do not think anyone can disagree with the sense of what this clause sets out in terms of what the responsibilities of the council should be. But I think we are getting into an area not covered by this legislation, that is, providing some opportunity for effective co-ordination of the various programs being attempted by the federal government, the provinces, major regions or municipalities.

It seems rather strange that this principle should be omitted, because in fact a great deal of energy has been wasted because contradictory programs have been operated by the federal government. This practice should now be eliminated, because the minister has told us so, with regard to programs operated by the federal government or the provinces. It would, therefore, seem very necessary that there be in the legislation some direct commission to this Council so that it will at all times consider how the various policies and programs being devised by one or other of the respective parties will mesh; and where they are not going to mesh, to say so. Unfortunately, the Council will be limited to saying this to the minister in the hope that he or his officials will communicate with other federal

departments, perhaps other provinces or responsible bodies, in order to arrive at the best possible program.

Without some responsibility for considering the question of co-ordination, a great deal of useful effort and initiative that might be taken by the council will surely be lost. The sense of the last amendment is merely to give the council some flexibility in its operations. If it were limited to the terms spelled out in this clause, we would restrict very largely, in its setting up and operations, the relationship of the council to the government of Canada, when surely it should not be restricted from considering very many items on its agenda which it considers important.

If the minister is as busy as I know he will be, and should be, in his function as minister responsible for this department, he will not always have time to refer matters to the council for consideration. If the council is given an opportunity to meet with regularity and to have support staff, it will be vitally important that there be provision in this bill that the council be enabled even occasionally to discuss questions or look into matters that under normal circumstances would be covered by their interest but would not be covered by the way in which the criteria are elaborated in this clause as it stands.

For these reasons, I think the amendments are important. If they are adopted, even if the Atlantic Development Council is to be much less a creature than the Atlantic Development Board, it will not be limited in its basic terms of reference in the kind of questions it must pursue if it is to carry out the kind of job necessary to any re-tailored structure.

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** Mr. Chairman, I agree entirely in principle with all the hon. member has said, but I think it is all there in the bill as it is. What are the responsibilities and duties of the minister? They are to elaborate plans, to ensure that there is co-ordination with the departments, to negotiate with the provinces, to approve projects, to consult with the provinces with regard to the functions of the Council, and so forth. These are the duties of the minister. The responsibility of the council is to give advice to the minister on all the matters within his jurisdiction. What do you want to add to that? I think it is all in clause 31, which reads:

—and make reports and recommendations to the minister on,

(a) plans, programs and proposals for fostering the economic expansion and social adjustment of the Atlantic region;