

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

strengthened as an institution. It may well be that one of the ways in which Parliament can be strengthened would be by reviewing the role of parliamentary committees to determine whether we should go even further than we have in strengthening them. I think we should allow ourselves time to reflect on the changes we have made so far, before going further, but we should clearly not ignore this question. In any event, the role of parliamentary committees is not a matter to be included in a government organization bill; it is a matter for this House and for Parliament in general. There can be no doubt that every Member of Parliament should be able to play a meaningful role in this institution and to take his job seriously, but in most respects what is done in this regard requires no special legislative authority.

The point was made that the manner in which ministries of state are to be established will, in fact, reduce Parliament's control over the executive. As I observed in my remarks when I opened this debate, it has been the custom in Canada, unlike in Great Britain, to have departments of government established by legislation. Ministries of state, however, will not be departments. They will not usually have any significant operational responsibilities. In other words, they will not manage programs. They will be relatively small in size and in most instances of a temporary nature. Their fundamental purpose will be to enable the government to assign responsibility to a minister for the development of policy in an area where the development of such policy is urgently required, and to equip him with suitable staff resources to discharge this responsibility.

● (9:30 p.m.)

If in addition to obtaining parliamentary approval of the budget of a ministry of state, the government also had to obtain prior approval for the very existence of a ministry of state, the fundamental purpose of quick response to urgent problems would, I submit, be completely lost. I do not think there is anything unreasonable in this proposal. Indeed, an arrangement of this kind is clearly essential in any modern government. I believe the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland) was particularly concerned about this matter and it surprised me somewhat that he should appear to be unaware of the legislation that has been enacted in his home province to give the executive virtually unlimited authority, without recourse to legislation, to organize itself as it sees fit. The authority obtained recently by the Manitoba government in this regard is far more sweeping than the authority currently being sought by this government.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to quote from one section of Manitoba's Executive Government Organization Act to illustrate the extraordinary nature of the powers of the Lieutenant Governor in Council in respect of government organization in that province. I quote:

Notwithstanding any act of the legislature the Lieutenant Governor in Council may determine the organization of executive government and of the various departments thereof, and for that purpose may

(a) establish, vary, or disestablish any department;

[Mr. Drury.]

(b) determine or vary the duties and functions of any department and transfer any duties and functions from one department to another;

(c) determine or change the name of any department.

Although the legislation passed by the Manitoba government, where the hon. member for Selkirk was only recently executive assistant to the Premier, is clearly very far reaching, several other provinces have legislation that gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council far greater flexibility to organize machinery of government than is the case at the present time with the Governor in Council. Concluding my observation on this part of the bill, Mr. Speaker, if one has any doubt whether the potential number of cabinet ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in Canada would be excessive after the enactment of Bill C-207, I would refer them to the situation in the United Kingdom where the total number of ministers, both of the cabinet and not of the cabinet, and parliamentary assistants is vastly greater than what is proposed here.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Surely that is a completely different situation.

**Mr. Drury:** In conclusion, let me revert to part VII of the bill relating to early retirement, to which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) made special reference. Hon. members will appreciate, I hope, that deputy heads—that is, deputy heads and chief executive officers of boards, commissions, corporations and other portions of the public service who are appointed by the Governor in Council—by the very nature of their appointments do not and should not enjoy security of tenure of office. In view of the lack of safeguards regarding tenure of office which are enjoyed by the great majority of public service employees, the government concluded that the least that could be done was to ensure that the pension prospects and related benefit protection should not be abruptly curtailed but should be extendable to age 60 if the retiring deputy head so desired.

The purpose of new section 11A of the Public Service Superannuation Act is to make it possible for a deputy head to continue to be a contributor under the Public Service Superannuation Act if, after ceasing to hold that office, he does not continue to be employed in the public service of Canada until attaining the age of 60. The ordinary public service employee who is given leave of absence to go on assignment with international organizations or to serve on a full-time basis with staff associations, for example, is permitted to continue to contribute under the Public Service Superannuation Act by paying both his own and the government's matching contribution to the superannuation account, presently 14 per cent of his last salary.

This is what is intended under this legislation when a former deputy head has elected to continue to contribute in accordance with its provisions. On making his election, he will indicate if he wants to continue to do so up to age 60, but it will be open to him to terminate that arrangement earlier if he so desires. The new regulations con-