

*Establishment of New Departments*

One of the results of the proposals is to leave the Department of Labour, now presided over by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre, so emaciated as not really to be a department at all. Except for the addition to the hon. gentleman's responsibility of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, one of the most effective ministers in this government would be virtually unemployed. So basically what I urge the Prime Minister to do at this resolution stage is to refer his proposals to a joint Senate and House of Commons committee for detailed analysis of the whole structure of departmental administration and ministerial portfolios.

I believe that hon. Senators and hon. members can advance new and simplified proposals which will accrue to public advantage generally. The present resolution will defeat effective and realistic ministerial responsibility; it is retrogressive and ought to be reconsidered.

**Mr. Mather:** Mr. Chairman, in discussing the proposal concerning the organization of the government of Canada I believe it is important that we try to get a perspective of the situation in which the government find itself today. In very broad terms something like 20 million people have sent 265 others here to Ottawa to do what we can to see that the government, its departments and its agencies handle the federal business of the country as efficiently, effectively and economically as possible.

The proportions of this federal business can be very briefly described in these terms. We take in and spend every year something over \$7 billion. We have at the latest count some 345,000 civilian employees working in the federal field. The figures I have cited, Mr. Chairman, reflect an enormous expansion in governmental activities over the last 15 or 20 years. It is natural that this has been the case because in the last two decades Canada has moved toward the status of a modern industrial state with the collective type of life and living which that entails.

Both the federal and provincial governments in their departments have certainly stepped up their efforts and their spending toward economic and social development. But this has been going on, Mr. Chairman, under unmodified constitutional provisions with few clear demarcations of the responsibility between the federal and provincial departments. With both stepping up activities there is duplication which is costly to the taxpayer who supports these governmental agencies. I

[Mr. Bell (Carleton).]

believe the overlapping of federal and provincial authorities is a subject related to the legislation before us, but I will not go into that. I will confine myself entirely to a discussion of the federal governmental need of reorganization, except to say in passing that there are at least 160 federal and provincial agencies involved in water management in Canada, a situation giving rise to a great deal of overlapping and duplication.

There is no doubt at all in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, that for many years federal ministers and departments and supporting agencies have been involved in related and fragmented responsibilities. As one who believes that public enterprise must continue to increase its worth and play a growing role in our way of life in Canada, I mean to do what I can to try to make public enterprise, which is represented by the federal government at the federal level, work efficiently and to improve its administrative functions.

I want to quote briefly from the findings of the Royal Commission on Government Organization, a report which we should remember was made some two or three years ago. I think this report is particularly pertinent to the resolution which is before us. It states:

It is a wasteful use of ministerial talent to have several ministers concerning themselves unnecessarily with common or closely related problems, just as it may cause a wasteful use of resources to have similar or related operations conducted by a number of separate units throughout the public service.

In addition to the proposals for consolidation of supporting services, a number of recommendations submitted in other reports for the regrouping of duties will have the effect of simplifying ministerial tasks. This can be seen, for example, in the proposal for consolidation of maritime patrol operations in the coastguard service, the transfer of the wild life service to the Minister of Fisheries, the transfer of the Canadian government travel bureau to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and the assumption by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources of responsibilities relating to northern Indians now held by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

So, Mr. Chairman, I take it that the measure before us represents at least a first step toward a regrouping of these federal functions in line with the principles which were enunciated as the result of the royal commission studies made during the years 1960 to 1963. It is proposed now to establish some new departments, to take from others some services which are now performed in them, and to try to bring out of the whole reorganization a more efficient piece of machinery with which to carry on the business of the