

Manpower and Immigration Council

regional committees, the specialized committees and the council were to be laid here before parliament, not only would this constitute an enormous mass of paper, but it could also paralyse the operations of the committees.

The employer and labour union representatives on those committees usually sit behind closed doors and their associations, the ones which they sent there, have full powers, rights, privileges to communicate directly with the government, with the members of the house, to make known their general policy. I think that nobody is being frustrated. This is a committee appointed to give advice and counsel to the minister and I think that from the moment you require all the reports to be tabled in the House of Commons, we are changing its character, and from that time on, there will be some rigidity in the reports, in the discussion, which will not benefit the Canadian people.

That is why we believe such a structure, which was always based upon those principles, is still worth while. It is acceptable, it is actually accepted by all union and professional organizations, and when something works well, I think that the hon. members, just like anybody else, would not be interested in changing it just for the sake of making a change. This fact is well recognized.

This is what I had to say, Mr. Speaker, about the criticism which has been expressed. In view of the important matters which will be brought to the attention of this house, even those with which the departments may be concerned, I hope that not too much time is spent on a bill known to the house and which, on the face of it, is quite imperative, I think, and should be approved as quickly as possible.

• (4:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, when the minister first entered the house some of us regretted the fact that he did so on the government side, but because of his past record as a fighter for civil rights and as a leader of the working people in an important trade union in his province I think it is fair to say that he came here with more good will on the part of members on both sides of the house than any other minister I can remember in my experience in public life. We were prepared to listen to the minister, give him the benefit of any doubts we had and give him time to implement the very fine

expression of principles he enunciated during the early months of his attendance in the house. Let me indicate to the minister that we feel the speech he made today was partisan and obviously in defence of everything his department has done. He ignored all our legitimate questions and criticisms. If he does not intend to take any greater action than he indicated, then any honeymoon there may have been has ended.

My colleague the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) asked a series of questions which were directed to her and other members of parliament including Liberals from Vancouver. These questions were not directed to these members by the Social Credit government of British Columbia and I think the minister should realize that my colleague has no particular reason to defend that government. The minister ignored completely the questions she raised and no explanations have been given.

The questions I asked were not directed to me by the Conservative government of Ontario and I have no desire or intention to defend them. I received these questions from officials and others who work for the school board of Ottawa and the board of education in the city of Toronto. They made it very clear to me that they did not wish to become involved in a political battle and I respect their desire in this regard. I made it clear to them that I wanted the official information which they had presented to their boards of education and which is available to every citizen of Canada. That is the kind of information which I presented yesterday.

What did we hear from the minister in this regard? I suggest that all we heard was a defence of three—

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, I never suggested the hon. member's figures were wrong.

Mr. Orlikow: The minister did not quite say they were wrong, but he did say I used figures for the wrong months and that had I not done so the picture would have been different. I will have more to say in that regard.

First of all, the minister again referred to the constitutional situation and suggested to members that if we were suggesting the bringing of education within the federal responsibility we would then be debating a different thing. None of us made that suggestion yesterday. When we were debating the changes in the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act, established by the