

the new minister. There is no doubt that many of these suggestions have a good deal of logic. However, in the case of the national parks, their primary purpose is recreational rather than ecological and this makes it currently appropriate to let parks and parks policy remain the responsibility of a minister who would have more time to devote to this important area.

Another point I wished to refer to was the suggestion that, in effect, a department of the environment already exists in the newly expanded Department of Fisheries and Forestry and that provisions in the government organization bill relating to the department of the environment were of little significance. I think this is a rather superficial reading, particularly of clause 5 of the government organization bill. Clause 5 not only confirms the transfer of responsibilities made by virtue of Order in Council P.C.1970-2047 pursuant to the Public Service Rearrangement and Transfer of Duties Act, but gives the minister a broad, residual responsibility relating to environmental quality. It is important to note that the responsibilities of a minister are not simply to administer the legislation which has been assigned to him; ministers' responsibilities are much more vast than that.

The department of the environment cannot be a "department of everything". Acknowledging that it might be desirable for a minister of the environment to exercise a great variety of responsibilities, all of which impinge in some way on the environment, one must at some point make a judgment as to precisely what responsibilities he must have, to be effective. In the case of the national parks, the act and long-standing policy dedicates them for the "benefit, education and enjoyment of all Canadians". Thus, while environmental concerns rank high in the administration of national parks, it is not essential at this time for the minister of the environment to have control of their administration to lead the fight against pollution and for the enhancement of environmental quality. Indeed, it is largely because of the excellence of parks administration, and the careful attention paid to conservation and environmental concerns in the pursuit of their primary objective, that it was decided not to transfer them to the new department. Close co-ordination of policies on the one hand and policies related to the environment on the other will, however, be ensured and the ministers and officials concerned have already begun in this regard.

Statutory authority of ministers can never hope to cover all the matters with which they must be concerned. Partly for this reason, clause 5 provides that the duties, powers and functions of the minister of the environment "extend to and include all matters over which the Parliament of Canada has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, branch or agency of the Government of Canada relating to," and then there follows a specific enumeration which includes, "the protection and enhancement of the quality of the natural environment, including water, air and soil quality". In other words, the responsibilities of the minister as outlined in the government reorganization bill go well beyond the responsibilities transferred to him by the order in council I have mentioned. It will be the responsibility of the minister of

Government Organization Act, 1970

the environment to be concerned with any matters relating to the quality of the environment. What specific action the government takes is another matter. It may be that the minister himself will have to take on new and additional responsibilities, or it may mean that one of his colleagues will be asked to do so. If these new responsibilities require statutory authority then, of course, parliamentary approval will be sought.

The final point I would like to raise with respect to the department of the environment is the question of what is going to happen to the Department of Fisheries and Forestry. Several hon. members have expressed their concern over this matter and have suggested that fisheries matters will be given a low priority with the creation of the new department. This is a completely unwarranted assumption. Some hon. members suggested that the fishery service would be swallowed-up in the new organization. The fear was also expressed that the proposed minister of the environment would not have the time to devote to fisheries matters. These fears are understandable and pose a challenge to the new minister. However, the circumstances also offer considerable advantage to those renewable resource programs in the new department.

One of the most troublesome aspects today in all renewable resource program areas is the threat of pollution. At both the provincial and federal levels, ministers responsible for renewable resource programs are being plagued by pollution threats affecting land, sea and air. By being able to influence directly the management of both renewable resource programs, such as fisheries development, and all those polluting influences that threaten these life-sustaining resources, the minister will be in a good position to safeguard the quality of the habitat of marine life. Undoubtedly, the new minister will face a major management challenge in his new department. However, the size and complexity of this new agency is not such that it stands in a class by itself. I am confident that the Canadian fishery service will benefit greatly as a vital component of the new department. It will be clearly identified and sufficiently autonomous to guarantee an increased rather than a decreased vitality in fisheries development in this country.

In my view, some of the most important observations on the government organization bill were those relating to ministers and ministries of state. One observation frequently made was that the executive was being aggrandized at the expense of Parliament, and such remarks were often accompanied by suggestions that parliamentary committees should be strengthened. As I mentioned in my earlier speech, a fundamental reason for establishing ministers and ministries of state is to strengthen Parliament by enhancing the accountability of ministers to this House. In essence, the provisions of Bill C-207 relating to ministers and ministries of state will serve to sharpen the focus of responsibility as between ministers and hence will facilitate their accountability to Parliament.

This government, then, accepts fully the premise that Parliament, and this House in particular, should be