

Economic Development

the required integrity of the Treasury Board more than a past president of that board. It is an education in itself in that job because you see the broad requirements and the broad distribution of programs of a very large institution called the federal government. There is no question that I will respect the Treasury Board's over-all responsibility for the allocation of expenditures and resources. In that process we will look within the existing programs of economic development and support, through the various departments, not all of which are on the board, for the reallocation and reordering of resources to do new things before we go to the Treasury Board to seek new funds. But I will go to the Treasury Board to seek new funds, which might mean the reordering of other programs outside the area of economic development support if we as a board are convinced that this is an economic requirement for that time. I will be advising the Treasury Board within the very broad area of economic development and support.

There is an obvious attempt on the part of the opposition to drive wedges between me and my colleagues by attempting to say that the establishment of the new board will downgrade this or that department. That is patent political nonsense. It might be understandable as a measure of approach to this change which in most people's minds, if they were objective, could be seen at least as an opportunity for improved economic development management and economic growth in the country. I would have thought that rather than the absolute concentration on the negative aspects in this debate, apart from a little barb here and a little brickbat there, we could have heard some opposition members say: "We wish you luck, Mr. Minister, for whatever contribution you might make. We suggest to you that there is an area of improvement here or there." But we did not hear much of this.

An hon. Member: You are going to get it.

Mr. Andras: I will close my remarks, Mr. Speaker, because, if what the hon. member says is true, it will be such a pleasant prospect to hear it from the opposition. I do not know how much time I have left, but I will try to conclude my remarks as soon as possible.

The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark) said in the first instance that they have looked at the structure of the government and the structure of the opposition parties and have decided to have six co-ordinating committees. Then he turned around and said that for us, the government, to have a co-ordinating committee is nonsense. If, God forbid, they ever sat on this side of the House, they would have six co-ordinating ministries.

Mr. Paproski: He said that? That is what you will have to do when you are in the opposition.

Mr. Andras: That is interesting. Maybe some of the mystery is still left to be unfolded. I had the distinct impression they planned to have a co-ordinating system. Obviously I commend it, but they cannot have it both ways. They cannot recommend this sort of thing and then criticize it the way they have. His

[Mr. Andras.]

comments were full of contradictions. I just wish I had an hour or more in which I could enjoy going over them.

One relatively minor, or perhaps not so minor, point has been the suggestion that the creation of this new mechanism will add expense to the taxpayer. We have clearly said that the secretariat will be small and that the expenditures of that secretariat will be contained within the fiscal ceilings we have already announced.

I also want to indicate that at the time we announced the proposed creation of the new ministry and secretariat, we announced the disbanding of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. The proof will be in the pudding.

I wish again I had more time. I want to leave some time for my friend the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees), but I should like to leave this thought behind. I would be very interested to hear—I hope it comes in the last moments of the debate—at least a note of optimism from the opposition, some hope, some encouragement, a note of good luck, the phrase "we hope it works", rather than the negative criticism we have heard in almost seven hours of debate.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak in the last few minutes of this debate I would like to thank the minister very much indeed for his generosity in cutting his remarks short so that I could have a few minutes at the end to express some views on this important matter. The other thing I would like to say is that from what he said about the policy put forward by my leader it is obvious he has misunderstood it. I will be glad to get together with him afterwards and explain to him what my leader was saying in this regard; I will take pleasure in doing that.

The only justification which exists for creating an economic super minister, as this bill does, is that the government is a government of misfits. The government's economic ministers are incapable of dealing effectively with the responsibilities entrusted to them because they have not had the training or experience necessary to cope with the complex economic problems with which their departments must deal.

● (1422)

What I have said applies to all of the ministers handling economic portfolios at this time. Because the time allotted to me in this debate does not permit me to deal with all of them, or even several of them, I intend to deal in some detail with one portfolio which is a clear example of what I am talking about. What I say applies to all of the economic portfolios in this government. The department I intend to deal with is the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

The Department of Agriculture must be headed by a minister who has had farming experience, because farmers alone are familiar with the problems facing the farming industry. The Departments of Justice and the solicitor General must be headed by lawyers, because they are the only ones familiar with the complexities of the law. Thus, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce must be headed by a minister who has had practical experience in the manufacturing, proc-