

Government Organization Act, 1970

Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, may I now speak to the bill itself. It is to set up ministers of state responsible for certain areas. I do not object to that. I see nothing objectionable in giving ministers responsibilities for certain areas. For example, there is no cabinet portfolio for the minister in charge of housing. Housing is not necessarily a municipal problem; it is a national problem also. I think there ought to be some cabinet position dealing with this matter. Housing must be made the responsibility of some department of government, otherwise some of us will say, "Housing is a municipal problem, and we therefore cannot deal with it. The subject will not fit into any pigeon hole in Ottawa." The result will be that we shall not be able to deal with housing in a responsible way.

Urban problems must also be dealt with. May I, in that connection, commend the Minister without Portfolio in charge of housing for his recent innovation which resulted in officials of CMHC as well as other experts taking part in a sort of "think" week. Hon. members will recall, as was reported in the press a few days ago, that the minister, CMHC officials and other experts in the field of housing, took two or three days off from their regular duties to consider the very serious problems in the field of housing. The minister wanted advice. That was the first time the mandarins or administrators had actually invited opinions from other experts. I commend the minister for that. I ask him not to pay attention to sneaky remarks in the press which complained that the conference had cost \$12,000, as though that was a fantastic amount. If the conference had cost ten times that sum it still would have been worth it.

I now intend to deal with one of the provisions of the bill found on page 5, that provision dealing with the National Research Council. I am glad that the President of the Treasury Board has remained in the House to hear our speeches. That, I think, is most responsible on his part. He knows well that I do not easily flatter ministers. Would the minister give some thought to renaming the National Research Council, mentioned under part III, and calling it the Research and Development Corporation? It should be a crown owned corporation for research and development. May I explain my reasons for my request. As the report of the Senate Committee on Science Policy indicates, scientific research in this country is broken into fragments. We have medical research, research for military purposes, research into aircraft, and so on. All in all, we spend about \$4 billion on research in Canada.

● (3:30 p.m.)

The complaint in the Senate report is that this research is not applied research, but almost pure research which is applied to one small department. The research branch within the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce will have absolutely no meaning unless it is co-ordinated with the Department of Finance, Department of External Affairs and other departments. Because our industry is not large enough to support private interest and development, a crown corporation will always be needed. This corporation should be responsible for all phases of

[Mr. Otto.]

research, scientific, market, inventory, sales, export, manufacturing and medical. Everything should be combined in one corporation.

I wish to give an example of what I am talking about. At the present time, the research corporation is being used almost exclusively for the military. It should have a much better and broader application within the government. At the moment, we are having a little more luck than we probably deserve with regard to exports. However, we have a problem with uranium. We are stockpiling it. The president of the uranium company is suing the Prime Minister on some issue. The world lacks uranium. Canada has very large quantities of uranium. What are we going to do with it? If we had a proper research and development corporation, people in that corporation would realize that many places in the world need electrical energy but do not have the necessary \$180 million, \$200 million or \$300 million to build an atomic power plant. The need is for small package units that would produce electrical energy. These could be exported on a lease basis rather than selling them. These could be installed in Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, Africa, the near East or anywhere else they are required. These countries could be charged on the basis of kilowatt usage. Imagine what would happen in these areas if they had power to start new industries and education. They do not have these primitive things which we take for granted. When speaking to the president of the Atomic Energy Commission, he informed me that such a plan had been investigated for many years. However, it would be rather expensive. He compared it to the cost of Canadian power which is generated from water. That is not the issue.

One segment of a research development corporation could research the demand for power throughout the world and what price countries would be willing to pay. Another segment could work with the Atomic Energy Commission to develop a small unit capable of producing 300 or a few thousand kilowatts. This could be installed in villages and towns without great expanses of hydro lines and cables. Canadian electrical engineers in the corporation could work on developing ways and means of packaging small units. Researchers in the Department of External Affairs could research conditions in countries willing to buy these units, as well as the agreements we would make with these countries. The financial research people could determine the length of time these units would be required and the profits that could be earned by our manufacturers. Another segment of researchers within this corporation could service these units.

It would be necessary to determine how much uranium we have in Canada. Also, how could we avoid having this uranium used for other than peaceful purposes? Market research could also be conducted by this corporation. When a report was issued by the corporation, all departments of government would have an accurate picture. This might help solve our problems with uranium, unemployment and rationalize our industry.

Canada almost has a world monopoly on uranium. We have productive facilities and good engineering techniques. No one will deny that we should be the most