

Government Organization

decisions are to be carried out, the structure to be set up must include people at the senior level of government service. For this reason, I think it ought to be easy for the minister to give an assurance that he will outline the system which the government will use.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I should like to call attention to a statement which the hon. member made a few moments ago. He said that he and his hon. friends were afraid not so much that the minister of the new department might fail to co-operate, but that ministers representing other departments might fail to do so. The hon. member ought not to forget that the duty set out in the legislation is the duty of the government as a whole. This is a law which binds the government, so the government as a whole, the Prime Minister and the cabinet, will have to implement it.

In these circumstances, I do not think the individual departments will have a choice. As far as the organization of these matters is concerned, I see no reason why the house should not know how we are arranging for the implementation of this section, provided nothing of a confidential nature is involved.

Amendment (Mr. MacDonald (Egmont)) negatived; yeas, 12; nays, 33.

Clause agreed to.

On clause 26—*General agreements with the provinces.*

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I indicated in my preliminary remarks, Mr. Chairman, that I intended to present an amendment to clause 26. It will be moved by my colleague the Postmaster General.

Mr. Kierans: I move:

That Bill C-173 be amended by striking out lines 24 to 30 on page 9 and substituting the following:

26(1) The Minister may, in co-operation with any province formulate a plan of economic expansion and social adjustment in a special area and, with the approval of the Governor in Council and subject to the regulations, enter into an agreement with that province for the joint carrying out of such plan.

● (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, I am very glad to see the minister introduce this amendment; I think it is a step in the right direction. Again, it emphasizes one of the points we have been concerned with in this legislation, which is that a province or provinces shall be involved at all stages in the devising of policies and programs for regional development.

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

The original clause 26(1), as may be noticed, omitted at the very important stage of formulating plans, the involvement of the province. I am very glad to see the minister and the government introduce this amendment, and I hope they may have another amendment or two in this regard as we go along.

Amendment (Mr. Kierans) agreed to.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall clause 26 as amended carry?

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Chairman, with regard to clause 26 (2) it seems to us that here we are faced with an even more important part of this particular clause. It struck the committee that the failure to include some provision for negotiation with the provinces prior to the ratification of an agreement by the two governments in question is quite a sizeable omission. I refer in particular to the second line of subclause (2), the subclause reading as follows:

Notwithstanding subsection (1), detailed negotiation of any draft agreement under this section shall not be undertaken by or on behalf of the minister unless the plan to which the draft agreement relates has first been approved by the Governor in Council.

It seems to me that if sufficient discussion and conversations could not be held with the provinces before the agreement of the Governor in Council is obtained, then we are in fact greatly limiting the participation of the provinces in the devising of the actual plans that will go into effect and which have implications for the provinces.

Therefore, I am going to propose an amendment. While it may not be quite the answer that it was prior to the moving of the minister's own amendment to clause 26 (1) does close what I consider to be a very dangerous gap in this particular clause. Therefore, I move that clause 26 (2) be amended by inserting after the words "Governor in Council" the following:

—provided such agreement has been generally accepted by the participating province.

The Deputy Chairman: The hon. member for Egmont moves that clause 26 (2) be amended by adding after the words "Governor in Council" the following:

—provided such agreement has been generally accepted by the participating province or other responsible authority."

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): No, Mr. Chairman, I have deleted those last four words.