

Government Organization

any department, as designated by the Prime Minister. The final disposition of that legislation has not yet been determined in that regard.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Chairman, I find myself still in a somewhat confused state. Even though this clause provides that inland fisheries will come under the responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries, am I to understand that the minister cannot inform the house yet whether he will have responsibility for inland fisheries when the act establishing the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is proclaimed? Is this the situation? I submit this creates considerable confusion, and heaven knows we are confused enough already in dealing with a bill of this magnitude which contains 106 clauses and combines apples with oranges and horses with rabbits. Can we not get down to some basis whereby on fisheries matters we can speak definitively and direct our inquiries to the Minister of Fisheries or the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce with some certainty that they are being directed to the proper minister? Unless something is done to establish direction, I submit we will—

Mr. McGrath: We will end up like the wheat farmer.

Mr. Crouse: One of my colleagues has said that we will end up like the wheat farmer and the problems he faces. We will be like the story that is told about Columbus; we will not know where we came from or where we are going, and when we get there we will not know where we are. Surely the minister can give us a more definite answer than that this matter is still in the hands of the Prime Minister. Anything he can tell the committee by way of information at the present time will be of assistance to us. It will be better than being told that the situation is still up in the air. Does such a situation still exist?

Mr. Davis: It is not up in the air, Mr. Chairman. It is in the hands of the Prime Minister.

An hon. Member: He is up in the air.

Mr. Davis: The hon. member has alluded to Christopher Columbus. He arrived at a very good place, and I am sure the freshwater fisheries legislation will do likewise. In any event, the Canadian constitution gives the federal parliament authority with respect to all fisheries wherever they may be carried out, whether offshore in the oceans or inland.

[Mr. Davis.]

The hon. member also knows that the freshwater inland fisheries have in large measure, been delegated by the nation to the provinces. That was a unilateral act and theoretically can be reversed at any time. But the hon. member has a good point with respect to the freshwater fisheries and I can assure him that the ultimate destination of the responsibility for the freshwater fisheries will be one which is satisfactory to him and to the House.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6 agreed to.

Mr. Drury: Mr. Chairman, could we now proceed to part II of the bill, dealing with communications?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Clause 7 is the next clause.

Mr. Drury: I would hope we would not deal only with clause 7 but with part II, communications as a whole, which would be clauses 7 to 12 inclusive.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

● (2:10 p.m.)

The Deputy Chairman: We are now on clause 7.

On clause 7—*Department established.*

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I assume the understanding is that on clause 7 we will have latitude to discuss the whole communications department and that this will not preclude discussion of the other clauses after we have passed clause 7.

Mr. Kierans: Mr. Chairman, the second section of this bill concerns the creation of a new department of government, a Department of Communications, to be headed by a Minister of Communications who will, at one and the same time, be responsible for the Post Office. Involved, therefore, is a new cabinet title, a rearrangement of existing ministerial responsibilities and, most important of all, the creation of a new department responsible for a field of activity that is relatively new in terms of its importance in national affairs, which is undergoing rapid and decisive change and which has, quite aside from its scientific and industrial importance, profound implications, social, cultural and political. For these reasons my speech will take a slightly unconventional tone; it will also be relatively long, which is not, I am afraid, unconventional. The duties and the areas of responsibility