

Government Organization Act, 1983

Annapolis Valley-Hants (Mr. Nowlan) raised the issue of a morale problem in the Department of External Affairs and the problem of conflicts in the line of command. Part of that derived from the fact that the trade function was reporting to the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the consular function was reporting to the Department of External Affairs, so there was a crossing of lines of communication.

One of the major features of the reorganization is that the trade function is put with the consular function so that the entire External Affairs operation reports through the Department of External Affairs. That cleans up the line of command and makes trade representations much more effective in the field since they will be under one administration. It is a step forward.

The other feature is that the Department of Regional Economic Expansion was established to enhance regional economic opportunity in the country. Over the years we found that the Minister of DREE became one voice among many in trying to advance the cause of regional expansion. By reorganizing the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion into the new Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, the regional aspect of the Government policy becomes integral to Government economic policy. As a result of this Bill, every Minister becomes responsible for bringing to the attention of Cabinet items and issues related to regional expansion.

It is terribly important, if we agree about regional expansion—which the Government does—that it be a prime focus of all Government policies. The placement of federal officers in each of the regions of the country to focus all Government programs, what is best for that region of the country, into a regional expansion mode, I believe is terribly important. That happens as a result of this Bill.

● (1720)

These are the matters brought forward as well as the changes to the Ministries, and the Parliamentary Secretaries from the Senate. However, the much more fundamental features of this Bill deal with cleaning up the lines of command in the External Affairs field so that the external thrust deals with the trade aspect as well as the external relations aspect, and it is all under one head, one line of command, and Regional Economic Expansion becomes an integral part of the economic policy of the Government and not simply a separate Department which tries to fight on its own for resources among the competing demands from other Ministries in the economic area. These features will, I think, set up two very important functions for internal economic development and expansion with clear lines of command and clear authority, and set up an external affairs operation which is clear again, under one set of command, one line of authority which deals with trade and external relations as an integrated package. I believe this is a very good Bill, a Bill which is long overdue.

I thank Hon. Members opposite for the co-operation they have shown in pushing forward the debate and making adjustments as we saw necessary, and coming to agreement in the

way this House of Commons should operate all the time. I am proud to stand and speak on third reading.

I will close by saying that, as a result of the changes we have made in Bill C-152, Canadians will certainly have the kinds of mechanisms in place to further the economic development goals of the country and to put a new face and new thrust on our external relations.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite so sanguine as the Parliamentary Secretary is about all the good points in this Bill. He talked about clearing up the difficulties of cross-communication between the counsellor and trade sections of the Department in the foreign missions abroad, and that this Bill now will square that away and there will be straight linear connections. Perhaps he could tell us what they did with the immigration part which has been hooked onto External Affairs? This provides out of the foreign missions, shall we say, an immediate 90 degree turn to the right, because it comes back to Ottawa and then must go from External Affairs over to Employment and Immigration. I hope we can get that particular matter cleared up.

There is another matter I am concerned about. I trust I can get the ear of the Parliamentary Secretary at this stage. Perhaps he could tell us whatever happened to the proposed amendments which were coming in from the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lumley) whereby he agreed—in the words of my colleague for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson)—that the word “Expansion” in much less attractive than the word “Development”. All these amendments were to be brought in. I saw the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion running back and forth as though consultations were going on, and I fully expected the Parliamentary Secretary would come in with those amendments which were necessary. It may be that in Part II of the Bill, which deals with that particular matter, there are too many references to regional industrial expansion, so people could not make the necessary amendments, shall we say, in the style which was appropriate. In any event, I am sure my colleague for Etobicoke Centre will be most disappointed. If they have agreed not to bring it forward at this time, so be it.

There is something I would like to say with regard to Parliamentary Secretaries. I could not agree more with what has been said by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Don Valley West (Mr. Bosley). I do not believe that Parliamentary Secretaries should be rotated on the basis of the calendar, because that means that everyone is being given a crack at an extra \$10,000 for two years. Some do not even earn 10 per cent of it, others will put in a fair day's work. That is because of the vagaries of the Minister to whom they are responsible. May I say, however, that it certainly does not provide the same training ground as is required in the British House of Commons where Parliamentary Secretaries may be shifted. What it does do is to conceal from people in certain constituencies that their Member has been tried and found wanting. In other words, this is the cover-up report, shall we say, from the teacher which says, “Well, Johnny is a reasonable student. Even though he is not able to read as well as he should, and he