

Government Organization

Mr. Woolliams: Someone said, "We hope there is a good one coming up." I will try not to disappoint my colleague. We have heard some excellent speeches in this debate. I suppose that on second reading we should be debating the spirit of the bill and I will try to stay within the terms of reference in that regard. I think that in a general way any Prime Minister of this country has great difficulty in forming a cabinet, for two reasons. One is our parliamentary system and the other is that we have always adhered to—or appear to have done, although no one wants to admit it—the three R's. One of these is to choose the right man—that is not always the greatest concern—the man from the right region, and often there is the question of religion. This practice has sort of shaped and framed many of the cabinets of this nation. You have only to read some of our history as outlined by Dawson in his "Government of Canada" to find this to be correct.

If we have a prime minister from one section of the country, we will probably have a minister of justice from another section. So what the Prime Minister and this government have tried to do—I do not say this in a critical way, but more in a philosophical way—is fit the job to the men available. That is what the Prime Minister has done. This bill was introduced as a reorganization measure. This sounds very good and I am sure the people who will read about it in the press will think, "Now they are reorganizing government and this really means reorganization of parliament". But that may be very far from the truth.

First of all I want to deal with the Department of Justice. However, before dealing with one particular item let us consider what the bill is really about. The Department of Justice is now being divided into three departments. It will be carved up something like the Christmas turkey; we will have the Minister of Justice, the Solicitor General and the registrar general of Canada. This is the first department to be reorganized. Then you have the department of manpower, which as I see it will take over immigration and combine labour with it. There is some merit in this. Then you have the department of Indian affairs and northern development. This department is being shaped from the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. I am somewhat sceptical about this change and will have something to say about it in a few minutes. Then we find that the Minister of Public Works has been given

control of and jurisdiction over crown lands. Anyone who has made any study of the Glassco report hopes that if the Minister of Public Works is to have jurisdiction over crown lands he will accept the recommendation of the Glassco report and unload a lot of that land which is not really used by the crown, but has been held at the crown's expense. You will find this in the Glassco report.

Added to the Department of Forestry we have the rural redevelopment program started by a Conservative government. I refer to ARDA. Then last but not least you have the department of energy, mines and resources. I think having a department of energy, mines and resources is probably an excellent idea because resources, when harnessed, are energy for our nation. There may be some merit in this regard. The Prime Minister said these changes are necessary to assist the executive in getting on with the job. If this is true, I am sure that members in every part of the house welcome the changes, because every member of parliament when he has gone back to his riding or has made a speech in somebody else's riding must have learned that the people of Canada think, rightly or wrongly, that nothing has been done by parliament.

Speaking as a member on this side of the house, I think the first thing we should make clear to the people is that it is the government's job to get things done in parliament, and if nothing is being done it is because of the failure of the government to provide leadership. This is a government reorganization bill. This government is selling reorganization to the nation and saying, "When we get these things reorganized, we will get on with the job." If this government had produced certain kinds of legislation, had put them on the order paper and they had remained on the order paper for a considerable length of time, and the reason the legislation was not passed was that the opposition were obstructing it, the opposition would have had to take a good look at itself and find out whether they were actually obstructing the government's program. But the facts are—you can dish it up as you like—that the reorganization under this bill will do nothing in particular to improve this parliament.

This is because we have had no leadership whatsoever; because we have had no legislation of any importance before parliament. Let me hit the nail on the head now. There has been no obstruction by the opposition. This