

Government Organization

the division of functions between these two departments.

In working out a division of resource work between the two departments, one possibility would have been to give the minister of northern development responsibility for resource areas on dry land, that is, land above sea level, and the minister of energy, mines and resources responsibility for resource areas under the water. This, Mr. Speaker, was not considered to be practical. In the far north areas of water interlace the many large islands and the thousands of small islands of the Arctic archipelago, while in Hudson Bay hundreds of tiny islands that are a part of the Northwest Territories speckle immense water areas.

To have the jurisdiction divided between dry land on the one hand and, if I may use the expression, "wet land" on the other might well have created administrative chaos. The best arrangement, after considering a number of possibilities, appeared to be for the minister of Indian affairs and northern development to have administrative responsibility for all continental parts of the two territories and also for the Arctic archipelago, including the underwater areas there in the area of the archipelago. In Hudson Bay, James Bay and Ungava Bay we have exactly the opposite situation to that of the Arctic archipelago. We have an inland sea interspersed with hundreds of small islands. The sensible arrangement there seemed to be to have the minister of energy, mines and resources assume administrative responsibility for these water areas along with the responsibility he will have for the other large areas of the continental shelf. To avoid confusion the minister of energy, mines and resources will handle the administrative work for the islands in Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay, as well as for the underwater areas south of a certain line.

In other words, as a purely pragmatic administrative arrangement, the water areas have been placed with the land jurisdiction in the Arctic archipelago where the land is the most extensive and important element, and the land areas have been placed with the water in the Hudson Bay area where the water areas are very much larger than that of the islands. The dividing line, so far as the departments are concerned, will run substantially along the south coast of Southampton and Baffin Islands.

This division is not reflected in the present bill because it has no legal consequences or

[Mr. Pearson.]

significance. It is simply a division of federal administrative responsibility between two federal ministers about which I thought I should inform the house. This information has already gone out in the schedule to Order in Council P.C. 1965-2284, which was tabled in the house on January 18, 1966. I do not believe there are any other comments I wish to make at this time. As I have said, particular questions of organization and administration will be dealt with by the ministers concerned, if these are matters which are of concern only to these departments. If the matters are of wider than departmental concern they will be dealt with by the Minister of National Revenue who will be the minister responsible for the Treasury Board.

I was glad to note during the discussion of the resolution many expressions of approval for this measure as well as some very constructive suggestions for possible improvement of the ideas and principles underlying the bill. The comments throughout the country, both at the time when the changes were announced last December and since, have reflected not only an awareness of the problem these changes are designed to meet but in general have given approval to the purposes of the government in legislation of this kind, designed as it is to deal with the changes.

This legislation, if the house accepts it, Mr. Speaker, will contribute to the more efficient operation of government at a time when that is one of the major purposes of parliament, and by contributing to the efficiency of government will enable the country itself, I hope, to deal more effectively with the complex and changing problems of our national life.

As I said in concluding my remarks at the resolution stage, there will undoubtedly be further changes required as conditions change, and they are changing with bewildering rapidity these days. It will be possible to adapt the legislation to these changes in part by action under the Public Service Re-arrangement and Transfer of Duties Act. It may even be necessary in the future to come back to the house for amendments to the bill before us. This measure is to make executive government more efficient, and it is one step in that direction. As other steps seem to be required we will be privileged, I hope, to bring the changes that may be necessary before the house from time to time.

Mr. Hamilton: Will the Prime Minister permit a question at this time dealing with the Privy Council? What arrangements will