

in some salient particulars as a result of having been brought before this House. Moreover, there are all the implications arising from the manner in which the ministries and ministers of state will be created, which I have already drawn to the attention of this House, and which suggest that the accountability argument is mere window-dressing.

Let me go further. If the government really wanted to increase the accountability of the cabinet to Parliament, would it in fact begin by expanding the number of ministers? Its priorities are all backwards. Why not begin, rather, with providing members of this chamber with the facilities necessary to make sure that the ministry is accountable? Why not begin by providing research assistance for members of this chamber as well as adequate office staff, in an attempt to reduce the information gap existing between the treasury benches and the members of this House?

Why not begin by strengthening the committees system of this House? Why not provide adequate staff for committees? Why not provide committees with the power to decide what matters are to be brought before them, rather than leaving that decision to the ministry? Why not insist that committees prepare an epitome of the proposals to be presented to the House to assist it in holding the ministry accountable? I suggest this is the logical way to start if you are really concerned about accountability of the ministry to the House of Commons. You do it by strengthening the individual member of the House and by so equipping him that he can do a job of criticizing the ministries. It had been my intention originally, as a result of this kind of consideration, to offer amendments to each clause in this section, substituting references to "Acts of Parliament" for references to "proclamations". However, on second thought I felt it would be best to defeat each clause in this section of the bill and thereby force the government, if it still sees merit in the idea of the minister of state—which idea I have not discounted—to bring in a mini organization bill each time it wishes to create a ministry of state, thus ensuring the consultation of Parliament.

If I can use as an example what has been said to be a possible department stemming from this bill, namely, a ministry of state for housing, if this bill goes through in its present form the role and function of a ministry of state for housing will be that which is determined by the cabinet. If, on the other hand, the post had to be created by an act of Parliament, the country would at least know what the rest of us in this House thought about it and would be able to weigh the cabinet's conception of that office against that espoused by other members of the House. Surely that is the function of this place. Moreover, there would be a chance at that time to amend the legislation. This is likely to be done with this government organization bill in regard to the ministry of the environment. It will be an important amendment.

● (9:20 p.m.)

I do not see why the government wants to take away from this chamber or, to be more accurate in an academ-

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ic sense, why it is not willing to give that opportunity to this chamber. It has always been the prerogative of the Governor in Council to appoint ministers. Forcing the government to bring each idea for a ministry of state before this House in order for the House to consider it would mean, in addition, that each piece of such legislation would be subject to sober second thought. It would not be simple proclamation by the cabinet caught up with a problem of the moment. Sober thought could take place in this chamber. This is not possible under the present legislation. For this and the other reasons I have cited, I urge the defeat of clause 14 and each clause thereafter.

Mrs. MacInnis: Mr. Chairman, I want to comment briefly on part IV of the bill. I share the disquietude voiced by my colleague, the hon. member for Selkirk. Looking around this chamber and seeing the velocity with which members opposite can emerge from the woodwork, I feel sure that by a head count we are going to be stuck with this part no matter whether we want it. As we are going to be stuck with this part, I am prepared to go on from that point. I realize that too much power is going to be given to the government by this method of creating ministries. It is inevitable that we are going to have this method. I want to know what ministers of state are likely to be created. I would like to see one or two created who will do something useful. I plead tonight that one of these ministers of state will be appointed to deal only with the question of implementing the recommendations of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: Down girls!

Mrs. MacInnis: Down with the applause until we get an indication that we are going to get more than kite-flying out of this. There has been too much kite-flying in the matter of giving effect to the recommendations in the report on the status of women. Ever since the report was tabled we have been tantalized by half promises and suggestions from the government. As a matter of fact, on several occasions the minister in charge of housing has held forth the idea that perhaps if we let this bill through, a minister of state will be appointed to look after the implementation of the recommendations on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. In reply to my question on the "late show" the other evening, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister briefly quoted with approval the words of the minister in charge of housing.

During the debate on the status of women we were told that if women were good and bided their time, a minister would be appointed who would be in charge of the implementation of the recommendations in the report on the status of women. I do not think that is good government. One month ago the Prime Minister made a speech which raised the expectations in women's organizations and in the minds and hearts of thousands of women in this country about the priorities of government with regard to these recommendations. Very little has