

had not taken the trouble to prepare a serious speech for the benefit of the committee. If he had made a short speech, members opposite would have complained he had not taken sufficient time to explain the situation.

An hon. Member: You are pettyfogging now.

Mr. Roberts: The hon. member says I am pettyfogging. He is being merely petty.

There remains the question, why has there been an expansion in the role of the Prime Minister's office and an increase in the number of its staff? The same question applies to the Privy Council office. The answer is the same as the one which explains the growth which has taken place in the office of the Leader of the Opposition. The same answer accounts for the growth of, for instance, the office of the Premier of Ontario. It applies to virtually every government in the past ten years.

There are two reasons for the growth which has taken place. The first is the pressure of detail in government, and the second is the pressure of time. How are contemporary governments to deal effectively with the mass of detail which demands their attention and the pressures on time when proposing legislation, when proposing expenditure, when proposing budgetary policy, in societies as complex as those of today? Again, how are governments to find the amount of time required, including time for consultation with opposition parties, between ministries, with government members, with outside interests? How can the executive be organized effectively in such a way as to allocate correctly the time available for necessary discussion before coming to a decision? These are the factors which in our system lead to the necessity of providing help—

An hon. Member: I think Parkinson understood the process better than you do.

Mr. Roberts: If the hon. member wants to refer to Parkinson, it is interesting that there should have been a faster rate of expansion in the staff of the Leader of the Opposition than there has been in that of the Prime Minister. Perhaps he needs a lot more help, for reasons which I think are obvious to members of the House.

There is a need for assistance. There is a need for a fusion of political and governmental responsibility at cabinet level, and at the level of the Prime Minister. We may not like this. We may feel it would be preferable to adopt the American system. But in a parliamentary system, this is where the fusion takes place, the fusion of government and political authority.

We have two instruments to assist the cabinet. One is basically political though not particularly partisan—the Prime Minister's office. It is not simply a service provided for the Prime Minister, but it is intended to assist the cabinet in its political function. The other is the Privy Council office, where expansion has also taken place, to assist the cabinet in the performance of its governmental functions.

I had hoped that the hon. member for Rocky Mountain would discuss today his theory that this expansion is leading to the presidentialization of Canadian politics. In my view, the arguments he has presented in an effort to

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substantiate this point, in newspapers and elsewhere, misconstrue the fundamental nature of the system which has been established. The basic difference between the operations of the PMO and the PCO and a presidential office is this—that those of the PMO and PCO are essentially staff functions; they are not executive functions but an advisory role undertaken in relation to the cabinet. To repeat, the PMO and the PCO are not executive arms.

Why is their advisory role necessary? Members may recall the words of President Kennedy when he was trying to explain how he became involved in the Bay of Pigs operation. He said: I should have learned long ago that I ought not to rely only on the experts. Any leader of government who relies upon advice from only one source will inevitably end up in trouble. The function of the PCO and PMO is to provide alternative sources of advice. The Privy Council office provides views alternative to those furnished to the cabinet through the ordinary departmental mechanism of the civil service. The Prime Minister's office provides the Prime Minister and the cabinet with a source of advice in relation to political issues alternative to that provided by the House, by caucus and by other means. The objective is to ensure that the range of options open to the cabinet is as wide as possible.

The hon. member for Rocky Mountain asked why parliament is not involved in this privy council activity. The answer is that there is a distinction between the executive and parliament—between the government and parliament.

Parliament is not an executive arm. It is, if you like, the inquest of the nation. It has a right to assess what the government has done; it assesses a budget before passing on it; it assesses legislation before passing on it; it assesses expenditure—rather badly, I think—before passing on it. Parliament is, I repeat, the inquest of the nation, it is the forum for grievances and it is the method of judging the performance of the government—but it is not the government itself. That is why there is not an integral participation by members of parliament, or of parliament, in the Prime Ministerial office or the Privy Council office. They are part of the organs and structure of government. They play an advisory role in decision taking. Parliament plays its role not in decision making, but in scrutinizing and control.

● (1730)

What does that imply, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North asked for the necessity, or the difficulty, of establishing open government in Canada?

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It closes the door.

Mr. Roberts: I suggest to the hon. member that it does not close the door. He might find it interesting to have a look at a book by George Reedy, President Johnson's press secretary, called "The Twilight of a Presidency". Mr. Reedy discusses the problems that are inherent—

An hon. Member: That is exactly what we mean.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It not only closes the door, it locks it.

Mr. Roberts: If hon. gentlemen will contain their impatience for a moment I will make the point better than they ever could, and then answer the point as they never could.