

*Government Organization*

**Mr. Jamieson:** We will strike some more.

**The Deputy Chairman:** We will now proceed to part VI, which is to be found on page 19 of the bill. This part relates to consumer and corporate affairs.

On Clause 52—

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Chairman, I hope the minister would be prepared to make a brief statement. Certainly, it is our hope to pass this section very expeditiously because we studied this matter in the health committee when it was dealing with the estimates. A number of matters affecting the department have been referred to the committee, but I think there are also a number of matters on which the minister should comment. Perhaps he will take this opportunity to make a brief statement to the committee.

**Mr. Basford:** Mr. Chairman, because the reorganization of my department was discussed in the Health and Welfare Committee when my estimates were before it, I did not feel it necessary to make a statement. But I would be happy to say a few words off the cuff on the reorganization. As hon. members know, when the announcement of government reorganization was made last July, it was stated that the whole of the standards branch of the Department of Trade and Commerce would be transferred to my department. It was announced that certain functions under the Food and Drug Act under the Department of National Health and Welfare relating to fraud and the economic aspects of the sale of food would be transferred and that the retail inspection function of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries would be transferred to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Previous to this reorganization, the department had been doing research in matters of consumer interest, playing a representation role within the government on behalf of consumers, and co-ordinating existing or planned consumer programs within the government, as well as running a consumer complaint and information service. With the reorganization that this bill will bring about, the department can establish a field staff by reason of transfers from other departments and give it an enforcement function.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Clause 52 (1) makes amendments necessary to transfer to the department the functions previously performed by the standards

branch of the Department of Trade and Commerce, and amendments necessary to transfer to my department the Weights and Measures Act, the Precious Metals Marking Act, and the National Trade Mark and True Labelling Act. Subclause (2) of clause 52 allows us to establish an inspection service within the department from transfers of people from the Food and Drug Directorate, from the Department of Agriculture and from the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and also gives us a field staff of inspectors for which provision must be made under subclause (2).

As a result of these transfers that are authorized by this act it has been possible to completely reorganize the consumer affairs branch of the department. As I explained to the committee, we now have within the department a new standards branch which is made up of units of the former standards branch of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the policy unit of the Department of National Health and Welfare concerned with fraud and the economic aspects of the sale of food. We are establishing within that standards branch new units in the fields of textile and chemical products. This new branch will be dealing with weights and measures and with labelling regulations. We also have a consumer research branch, a new operations branch—

**Mr. Peters:** May I ask the minister a question with regard to weights and measures standards? Is it intended under the new legislation to instigate a continuing study with regard to the transfer to the metric system?

**Mr. Basford:** Not within this reorganization legislation. Conversion is the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. However, there is within the government an inter-departmental committee in which a number of my officials are extremely involved.

I mentioned the reorganization that was made possible in the consumer affairs branch of the department. I also mentioned that we have a consumer research branch and a new operations branch to direct the work of field units acquired from the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries. As a result of this reorganization, we will be opening regional offices of the department in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

I think that the creation within the department of a field staff and the provision of field