

Government Organization Act, 1970

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: One could never accuse the Prime Minister of that.

Mr. Trudeau: As a result, the cabinet took this decision. That decision was communicated to the Public Service Commission and the Public Service Commission went about trying to devise a plan which would produce the results sought.

To add to my previous answer, I said that this is a bilingual country, but the specification was Francophone and they might be of any racial origin.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The President of the Treasury Board on January 26 said: "It will not be a program approved by the government until it has been submitted to the Treasury Board and approved." Now the Prime Minister says that it was approved in November.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Some people have been asleep at the switch.

Mr. Woolliams: Go on; let us have another answer like that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is hardly a question of privilege. It is a point of discussion. There will be other opportunities to discuss this matter. There will be another question period tomorrow, and I suggest to hon. members that the matter might be pursued then.

Mr. Bell: No doubt it will be aired on television.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege. I ask the Prime Minister to explain why he said that this matter was decided in cabinet in November when only last week we were informed that the government, after trying to find who was responsible for the memorandum, had not been able to do so. I therefore suggest that this nonsense about a November cabinet decision is just that, nonsense.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is hardly a question of privilege. It is further questioning. As I said, there will be another question period tomorrow and hon. members may then be given an opportunity to pursue the matter if they are not satisfied with the information they have received. Orders of the day.

• (3:00 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION ACT, 1970

PROVISIONS RESPECTING DEPARTMENTAL REORGANIZATION, MINISTRIES OF STATE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES, ETC.

The House resumed, from Monday, February 1, consideration of the motion of Mr. Drury (for the Prime Minister)

[Mr. Trudeau.]

ter) that Bill C-207, respecting the organization of the government of Canada and matters related or incidental thereto, be read the second time and referred to the committee of the whole.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, just before the debate ended yesterday, I had mentioned—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if hon. members would allow the hon. member who has the floor a chance to make his remarks. Perhaps the conversations going on might be pursued outside the House or behind the curtains. They are somewhat embarrassing for hon. members who want to listen to the hon. member and, as well, for the hon. member who is trying to make a speech.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, members who rise immediately after the question period run into this sort of situation almost every day. Last evening, when concluding my remarks, I mentioned that the question of the control of our environment ought to transcend any sensitivity about the constitution, about what might be said at the meetings of premiers and the like. What is involved here, quite apart from the environment, is life itself. Every day we become aware of new substances polluting our environment. Every day we learn of additional chemicals and poisons.

The notable case brought to our attention in the last few days is the discovery of a higher than tolerable level of mercury in swordfish. Many of these swordfish live in midocean. Earlier on the west coast, we discovered that catches of dogfish, destined for Europe, contained a higher than tolerable level of mercury. The fish were condemned. There are many other species of fish which feed on the bottom of the ocean. They could, likewise, contain levels of mercury or pesticides which, if consumed by humans, would be injurious. Such chemicals are so injurious to the fish life in the oceans. It is true that, politically, Canada cannot exercise jurisdiction beyond its boundaries and beyond its territorial seas. It is true that, if we take some action, we may be able to influence indirectly other countries about controlling the environment within their jurisdictions. Certainly, Canada ought to pursue the course it has pursued in some instances.

For instance, to indicate our concern we passed a bill to permit us to exercise some control over the environment in the Arctic. In that case, the government did not hesitate to bring forward legislation extending our sea boundaries 100 nautical miles out from our land. Indeed, we were concerned about international law and international concepts of law, but we said that our decision could not be challenged in international courts. Surely, even if it may not be practical or even desirable to extend our jurisdiction for such purposes out into the ocean, to the extent that we can exercise such jurisdiction we should take definitive measures to protect life and to protect ourselves.

The ocean produces 70 per cent of the oxygen which we breathe. Scientific studies have shown that because of pesticides, other chemicals, tons of junk and billions of gallons of other materials being poured into our oceans,