

during a government's tenure of office. In other words very few would be unable to get a piece of the pie the Prime Minister wants to give his supporters.

Mr. Chairman, one may recall that when this omnibus bill was introduced, Mr. Speaker mentioned that perhaps the limit had been reached concerning the introduction of omnibus bills in this House.

I should not like to condemn Bill C-207 as a whole.

This legislation surely contains provisions that are on the point of being enacted and I do not see why this government insists on having the whole bill adopted at the present time. If the government listened to reason and simply withdrew clause 14, this legislation would be adopted very quickly.

I must remark that people do not readily understand why in Canada, where the population is about 21 million, this government should try to multiply the positions of ministers and parliamentary secretaries, whereas much larger countries, for instance, the United States and Great Britain, tend to consolidate their departments in order to make them more efficient.

The government stated that this measure was designed to ensure better administration. Judging from the way this government is running state affairs, one cannot help but conclude that more confusion will result. A greater number of people will have to deal with such and such a problem, which will create confusion. Instead of providing the Canadian people with the more effective and decentralized administration which government members seem to want so much, we will have just the contrary.

Just like other opposition members, I can only recommend to the government that they withdraw the bill under study or at least clause 14. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) may rest assured that should he do so, this measure would quickly be passed.

Those, Mr. Chairman, were the few remarks I wanted to make with respect to Bill C-207.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, one of the interesting announcements contained in the Speech from the Throne on Thursday, October 8, is the following paragraph:

To foster coordination of the activities of all levels of government, and to contribute to sound urban growth and development, the Government proposes the re-organization of its urban activities under the direction of a Minister of State for Urban Affairs and Housing.

In reply to my question of March 17 with regard to the ministries of state that would be set up, the Prime Minister stated:

—we would wish to have a minister of state designated for the purpose of looking at housing and urban affairs.

Government Organization Act, 1970

This is the only opportunity that hon. members, including the former mayor of Toronto who have a great interest in housing and urban affairs, have to say what they think should be included in a ministry of state for housing and urban affairs or, as stated in the Speech from the Throne, urban affairs and housing. Hon members should not miss the opportunity of speaking on housing at this time. Once we have a fait accompli, that is once the ministry is established, it will be very difficult to get any laws changed. Perhaps this illustrates the fundamental weakness of the legislation with regard to the point I have made twice before and will again several times.

As elected representatives of the people, we will not be permitted to get a point of view across if we tame the swell of the ocean by the creation of these ministries of state without anticipating what kind of ministry will be set up. Once the debate is over, we will no longer have an opportunity and Parliament will have lost a great deal more of the strength it once had to react to the views of the people. I make no apology for speaking briefly on this subject. I will be brief because we must go on to other matters at five o'clock, matters which I look forward to with a great deal of interest. I have to attend a committee meeting this evening, so I will have to finish my speech on housing at a later date.

This is the only opportunity for a full-scale housing debate. We must state what the function should be of this reorganized ministry. I presume that the Prime Minister and the government have more in mind than a minister without portfolio reporting to this House on behalf of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In view of the thrust and push of urban problems, there has to be something more. Parliament authorizes the spending of a great deal of money out of the federal treasury to deal with the housing problems of Canada. Therefore, we must have a great deal more say with regard to the policies and programs on which this money will be spent.

The Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities today presented a thoughtful brief to the federal government. It suggested that the near total freeze on urban renewal spending be lifted. There should be some discussion on this matter in this chamber. Are the mayors right in making that suggestion to the minister without portfolio in charge of housing? They suggest that the federal role be largely a funding operation and that the policies with regard to the spending of the money be made with provincial and municipal cooperation. Do we want to hand over vast amounts of money without stating how the money should be spent? That is an important policy question. It is something we have to discuss before this ministry is set up. There are other suggestions, but I cannot state them all in the minute that remains.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard): Order, please. It being five o'clock, it is my duty to rise, report progress and request leave to sit again.

Progress reported.