

*Social Development Ministry*

let) sits—at least, where he did sit; he is not here now—he who presumably looks out for the consumers' interests. There sat the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy). He is not here either. He is responsible for the status of women in this country and most women I know are consumers. There should sit the Minister of Labour (Mr. Regan) who is responsible for fitness and amateur sport affecting the health and well-being of Canada's young people especially. There should sit the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) protecting the health of Canadians and determining their welfare needs. She is not here either.

● (1550)

There used to sit the Minister of State (Multiculturalism) (Mr. Fleming) to ensure the preservation of Canada's many non-Anglo-Saxon communities and cultures as expressed through their very close sense of family life. There should sit the Secretary of State (Mr. Fox), but he is not here either; he dictates what Canadians should and can watch and hear as families. There should sit the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), but he is not here either; he is forever hearing about his industry's concerns about the family farm. There used to sit, but he is not here, the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) who has thus far refused to make the sale of family farms or capital gains tax burdens any easier on Canadian farmers.

There sits, bless him the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald), the one minister who takes his responsibilities seriously and who must be constantly vigilant on behalf of Canadian war veterans and their dependants and the futures that these families face. There should sit, but for some reason he is not here either, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro), who is technically supposed to be looking after the welfare of Canada's native and northern peoples and their social concerns.

I may have missed three or four other portfolios, Mr. Speaker, but the point is that throughout the list of responsibilities of ten different federal ministries the common concern, the element that knits all those portfolios together, is the family unit. Nobody could describe the importance of family to government better than that very honourable lady, the former member for Scarborough Centre, Mrs. Diane Stratat, when she said on November 20, 1979, as reported at page 1517 of *Hansard*:

As the basic unit of society all government activity all year round should be directed at the perpetuation and protection of the concept of family, not necessarily family in the traditional sense but family as a concept of life wherein family members are encouraged to live fully as responsible members in community with each other. We must be willing to accept and respect all forms of family life, but above all we must recognize family.

Canadians express their self-worth through their families, and the family unit is the most intimate and important focal point in life for many millions of Canadians as individuals. And yet, as we have seen, Mr. Speaker, of all the senior cabinet ministers and junior ministers and ministers of state and parliamentary secretaries and committee chairmen those people have over there, no one in the federal government has

been charged with responsibility for the family—the average Canadian family unit—until now, Mr. Speaker.

Given this social development minister's umbrella portfolio, its all-encompassing impact on Canadian society, its bringing together so many family-oriented departments and agencies of government, it seems obvious to me, Mr. Speaker, that this new minister is responsible for the family unit in this country.

Indeed, we should look at the Minister of Justice's (Mr. Chrétien's) own family on that side—his family of portfolios. At least 10 of his cabinet colleagues will be regarding this minister as the government head of the social policy family, and yet how is this minister going to operate for the benefit of the individual Canadian family? How is any Canadian individual and his or her family going to get any new ideas through to this super ministry and their senior bureaucrats?

The family is the consumer, Mr. Speaker, but there is a real difference between the family in the health sense, the family in the welfare sense, and the family in a consumer sense. We need a department of consumer affairs to keep an eye on pricing, advertising or misleading advertising, the cost of living and so on. We need a department of health involving doctors and hospitals and grants to provinces and advice to Canadians on hygiene. We really need a separate department of welfare, in my view, which relates to personal tragedies which are most frequently and most closely tied in with the job opportunities branch of government—that is, the Department of Employment and Immigration whose responsibility it is to get people off the welfare rolls.

If anything, Mr. Speaker, we do not need bigger ministries in this country. We need ministries which are more compact and more in touch with the people and with reality. The bigger a ministry gets, in my view, the less it can be in contact with the people and the realities of every day Canadian life.

It was the former leader of the party and a most distinguished parliamentarian, the Hon. Robert Stanfield, who said in Victoria in a speech about six months ago that government has got to get back to the people. I wonder if the Minister of Justice can assure us that this new social development ministry will be getting back to the people, or will this become a sprawling and appalling thing to the taxpayers of Canada? Does the public have the remotest chance of getting through to this new bureaucracy, let alone having any impact on it? That, Mr. Speaker, is what is almost frightening to me about the way this Liberal administration could deal with the scope and the magnitude of this all-embracing social ministry. What input can the average Canadian have in terms of his own individual social development in the next decade or two, and how can the individual Canadian feel any sense of security about what the government is setting up?

My role as the consumer affairs critic for this party makes me think automatically in terms of how government impacts on the little guy, Mr. Speaker. Speaking of little guys, we have no finer example on this side of the House than the hon. member for Rosedale, who I might point out was very big with the health ministry when he was head of that department. He was the first minister they could ever see through a micro-