

Government Organization Act, 1970

What we want to know is, when does a co-ordinated energy policy become a continental energy policy? Surely the Acting Prime Minister was playing with words. I hope that before this debate is over we shall have a statement from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources setting out government policy on our energy resources. Are we to continue giving away the most accessible energy resources we have, and then be forced to go farther afield to secure energy resources for our own uses, resources that will undoubtedly cost more than those immediately available? These are questions we want answered. If we do not obtain the answers in this debate, we shall expect to obtain them during committee of the whole stage.

Mr. McCleave: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Now may I say a few words about superannuation.

An hon. Member: Why not speak to the bill?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): If the hon. member does not know about the bill, I suggest that he has not read it. The bill deals with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It deals with the environment and with the matter of superannuation. The trouble with hon. gentlemen opposite is that they have really been sold this bill of goods and the idea that if you tinker around with the machinery it does not matter whether or not you have a policy. We have tried to discover the government's policy. If the government has a policy, we shall expect the ministers to stand up and outline that policy during this debate.

In closing I want to say a few words about the superannuation provisions. We shall deal with them more specifically in committee of the whole. I think there is some merit in allowing superannuation plans to be flexible. But surely the flexibility ought not to apply just to privileged groups in the Public Service. The provision about which we want a great deal more information is the one saying that a deputy minister who has served for ten years or more with the government shall have the right to leave government service, work in industry or elsewhere, continue to make his superannuation contributions, which would be matched by the government, and be eligible for a full pension despite the fact that he may have worked for the government for only a limited number of years prior to his reaching the age of 60.

What is the rationale behind this provision? If a man's services are not satisfactory to industry, they let him go. They may give him one year's salary or even allow him to take a deferred pension. In industry, generally a man is not allowed to leave one firm's employ and continue to pay into that firm's superannuation fund so that he will obtain a pension not only from the employer he has left but from the new employer to whom he has gone. This is a most unusual provision. If some deputy ministers or civil servants are performing services that are no longer satisfactory, then surely the government can dispense with their services. It can give them a separation allowance or a gratuity and allow them a deferred pension.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

Why is this special provision being made for deputy ministers only? Of course, some deputy ministers have been former Liberal candidates and Liberal activists. Is this the sweetener that the government is giving to these people to ease their discomfort when it turns out they are administrative mediocrities and political liabilities? Is this provision designed to enable representatives of industry to move with ease from government service to industry and then back to government service without any loss of income security?

The Prime Minister keeps talking about participatory democracy. What the Liberal government has been building over the last few decades is a managerial oligarchy manned and manipulated by the corporate structure. Many of the ministers in this administration and in the Pearson administration were former civil servants—part of the mandarin class that makes policies behind the scenes. Some of these ministers went back into the civil service, like Mr. Pickersgill and Mr. Chevrier. They moved easily back and forth within the inner circle of the power-brokers.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Most of the advisory committees which have been established are, like the advisory committee on oil and gas, made up of representatives from the very industries they are supposed to regulate. The line between the government and the corporate structure is becoming increasingly blurred almost daily. While the Prime Minister makes speeches about participatory democracy, the corporate elite are manipulating the levers of power. They no longer merely advise the government; they are rapidly becoming the government. I think, therefore, that this provision to enable deputy ministers to move from government to industry or from industry back to government, always within this cosy little arrangement, is one which should be looked at very carefully.

The President of the Treasury Board told us this afternoon about the nuts and bolts of administration. I urge the government to use this debate to outline the policies behind this administrative reorganization. What are the goals toward which the government is moving? Let us hear from the man who is to be the new minister of the environment. Let us hear from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Above all, let us hear from the Prime Minister so that we may know the purposes which lie behind this administrative re-shuffle and the aims and objectives the government has in mind in presenting this legislation. We have heard about the administrative changes. We want to know the policy decisions which lie behind the legislation we are asked to consider and we shall insist upon being told what they are either on second reading or in committee of the whole.

[Translation]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, on reading Bill C-207 entitled "An act respecting the organization of the government of Canada and matters related or incidental thereto" a member cannot but leap with anger.

A brief study of the administration of the Liberal government since it was elected in 1968 reveals that its