

Manpower and Immigration Council

and control. We hope that there will not be regimentation of those persons who will be seeking direction and guidance from the officers of the new offices that are to be established. We hope that any direction to be manifested under this new body will be the kind of direction that will benefit the country as a whole and lead to new opportunities for those individual regions of the country that at the moment lag behind economically. In that way those regions may enjoy their fair share of the national prosperity.

[Translation]

Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, those of us in this house who are not on the government team quite often enjoy finding flaws or weaknesses in our legislation. Those who devised our parliamentary system, and who wanted it to include an opposition were probably justified in asking the opposition to watch over the measures taken by the government in order to protect the interests of the people who send us here. However, quite often, by dint of opposing the government, a complex seems to develop against all measures proposed.

It is a disease to which we, the independents, are more immune, at least this is so in my case; indeed I must distinguish between the three independents who are in this house, because I have been sent here by my constituents in an effort to co-operate with the government which was elected on November 5 or November 8, 1965—had it been the Conservative government, my attitude would have been the same—to make suggestions as freely as can be done by anyone who does not have to follow the party discipline, who does not have to obey instructions to vote for or against any measure; it is in that frame of mind that I should like to make a few brief remarks to the minister.

I shall, at the outset, make a few laudatory remarks. His earlier statement with regard to the co-operation which he has established between the federal and the provincial governments on matters of education—to use an expression unknown in my time—is groovy. The minister is on solid ground. In short, I consider it as conventional and I think that it will be recognized and supported by the leaders of every province in particular by those of my own province who intend to retain their rights over education, even at the adult level.

And the minister's statement was so clear and straightforward that it might help clarify also any ambiguity which resulted from all

[Mr. Sherman.]

those discussions on semantics in which we have indulged for some time, without any efforts being made to define the words so as to be absolutely sure that we understand one another and that we are talking about the same thing.

I should also like to add another remark which I think the minister will enjoy. I had the opportunity in my own city, in my riding, particularly during the last three months, to witness the operation of the new manpower office where there are thirty or thirty-five employees. And I will tell the minister that our office at home, in Trois-Rivières, is operating with extraordinary efficiency. It is under the direction of competent people who fulfill their role with the kind of zeal I would call missionary.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I was personally struck because for the 20 years I have been in public life, I have had the opportunity to deal almost constantly with the problem of unemployment and I believe that in those 20 years, this is the first time that I find a truly efficient organization doing something to improve the fate of the jobless. I am mentioning my own area but I suppose the same thing occurs elsewhere.

I should nevertheless like to make a few suggestions to the minister. I would like to call to his attention a weakness that is often noticeable on government committees dealing directly with the public. It is not more noticeable at the federal level than at the provincial or the municipal levels; in fact, it occurs in almost all committees dealing directly with the public on such human, urgent and basic problems as livelihood, for instance.

On several occasions, I have noted that on the long run, the members of those organizations become indifferent, so to speak, tired of listening to sad stories all day long; they are sometimes annoyed at finding that the applicants—our constituents—are not always properly attired and are not always duly considerate of those officials who are doing their best, and we happen to learn that the latter fail to meet the most elementary requirements of what I would call human relations. Because of their indifference, they quite often treat their customers as intruders. They forget sometimes that they are dealing with human beings entitled to some consideration, and they sometimes treat them in a cavalier way. Others, having had a thorough explanation of the legislation, go out of their way to try to find in the acts some fine points which would preclude a solution to the problem of the applicant, instead of exerting every possible means to help him.