

*Establishment of New Departments*

become necessary because the exposure to public gaze of unconscionable profiteering would be enough to correct the situation. If the government is not going to set up a department of consumer affairs, then certainly the kind of department the Prime Minister proposed today could be the nucleus around which a department of consumer affairs could be built. I hope that if time permits my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, will elaborate on this question because it is something to which she has given a great deal of thought and about which she is very enthusiastic.

● (5:40 p.m.)

Finally, I want to say a word or two about the proposed president of the Treasury Board. Again, I agree with this proposal. I hope that in the not too distant future the Prime Minister will appoint a minister to give his full time to the responsibilities of being president of the Treasury Board. I should like to see the Treasury Board working on two functions which are not assigned to it at the present time. First, I think the Treasury Board ought to have a branch which would act as a budget bureau. At the present time, we have a Treasury Board which allocates funds according to departments and subdivides them according to branches. We have an Auditor General who audits the expenditures of these agencies. However, there is no agency for auditing the performance of departments and branches; there is no agency to examine the programs to see whether they still fill a useful function or whether they should be curtailed or even eliminated.

Every member knows that Parkinson's law operates in every government. Consequently, from time to time we set up commissions like the Glassco Commission which report to the government on whatever extravagance, duplication, overstaffing and unnecessary procedures are found. The tragedy is that by the time a government, not necessarily this government but any government, gets around to dealing with the situation which has been described by the commission the situation itself has altered. The only effective way that a government can deal with the problem of the proliferation of staff, extravagance and waste is to have a continuing agency constantly examining departments, constantly going over their programs to see whether or not those programs are still useful and whether or not the department is still using

its staff efficiently or is asking for more money than the service which they render warrants. Every member knows that no program, once having started, is ever voluntarily curtailed by those who are running it.

Every minister and every deputy minister is told by his branch head that a program is absolutely necessary. A program may have been started 30 years ago to meet a certain situation and the situation may have changed, but the program has to be kept going. If the government is really going to do an effective job of eliminating waste and extravagance. I think they need something resembling the United States budget bureau. I can remember an instance when I was associated with a provincial administration. A certain department was asking for more money, more staff and more space. This meant putting up new buildings. The department alleged it was so crowded, so understaffed and working in quarters so congested they were not doing effective work. They made a marvellous case for a lot more money, a lot more space and a lot more people. When the budget bureau had investigated the case for over six months they found that by a simplification of procedures, by amending the filing systems, they could move some of the staff to other departments. Then, by microfilming their records, we were able to get rid of hundreds of file cabinets which resulted in more floor space.

Unless you have an agency to do this the staff keeps growing, the space required keeps increasing, the demands for larger and larger estimates keep rolling in to the Treasury Board. It seems to me one of the functions that ought to be given to this Treasury Board branch would be the assignment of teams to any department that is asking for more money to conduct an investigation. Even if the department is not asking for more money, perhaps it is getting too much money now. A team of experts could be sent to examine the procedures, to analyse the program and make a report to the Treasury Board whether or not this department was getting enough money or too much money, whether it could reduce staff and get along with a smaller allocation of funds.

The other function I should like to see given to the president of the Treasury Board is related to the whole basis of economic planning. I am trying to fit within the government's framework something I had hoped the government would do. Personally I would prefer to see a department of economic affairs and planning, an agency which could