

Establishment of New Departments

of Labour, I think myself that if the present minister of manpower is going to hope to do the job that is laid out for him, along with immigration and other classes of work, he will have to be triplets. I should like to underline, just for a moment, what my colleague the hon. member for Vancouver East said about the desirability of the Solicitor General, whose work now includes the penitentiaries and parole boards, paying some heed to the demands of prison officials and the people in penology before these women drug addicts are moved out to that new prison at Matsqui. These people have made a study of the problem and have had something to say about the extreme foolishness—perhaps an even stronger word could be used—of sending these women back to Vancouver after their release. There is only one place they can go, and that is 30 miles back into the metropolis of Vancouver where they originally got into trouble. Vancouver is the worst drug centre in the whole of Canada, and these people will only resume those associations and those habits which got them into this trouble in the first place.

I would hope the Solicitor General would take a long second look at this matter. I am convinced he would be far more inclined to follow the advice of those in the east who have made a study of this thing and who have successfully released some of these women into Ontario centres, which are not so dangerous for drug addicts.

I want now to turn to the other point I wish to mention tonight. If it were possible to introduce an amendment to this resolution, I would do so. While it is an excellent thing to have these new departments created, and I think in the main we shall find they will work out satisfactorily, I am going to suggest that the one which has been left out is probably more important than any one of the changes that has been made. We have a government department for nearly every sector of the population we can mention, except the big one which covers all of us in our capacity as consumers. We have no government department today to look after the affairs of the millions of men and women who do the buying in this country. There is no government department to advise them, to protect them or to look after their interests in the consumer field.

Consumers are big business in Canada. They spend about \$29 billion annually. By far the greatest part of our spending in this country is done by consumers, yet they have

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

no department of government solely charged with looking after their interests. I know there are bits and pieces of consumer legislation and consumer facilities scattered throughout the various government departments. For instance, Trade and Commerce has its division of weights and measures. Agriculture has its consumer information service, and the inspection of meats and other products. Fisheries has its consumer branch and its public information branch. Health and Welfare has its food and drug directorate. Justice has the combines legislation. Undoubtedly there are other departments of government which have, as I say, bits of consumer legislation in operation; but there is no single department charged with the responsibility of looking after the interests of consumers as a whole. This department is long overdue.

Outside this department the Canadian Association of Consumers has for six years now been demanding over and over again that we should have consumer affairs in charge of a single minister. They urged specifically in their brief, which was presented just three weeks ago, that before this legislation is passed there should be a review of the necessity for having a department of consumer affairs set up. I do not intend to cover the whole field of what should be included in a department of consumer affairs, because that will be done during discussion of my resolution, which will be up for discussion shortly. However, I should like to quote from the brief of the Canadian Association of Consumers:

● (8:30 p.m.)

Consumer problems concerning several departments are sometimes referred to interdepartmental committees. If the chairman has no definite responsibility for the effect of government policy on consumers, the problems are apt to become "bogged down" in these committees.

For example—in December 1963 the recommendations on pesticides made by the committee of the House of Commons on food and drugs were tabled in the house and were later referred to an interdepartmental committee. C.A.C. is still waiting for action on the recommendations concerning the labelling of pesticides.

There, Mr. Chairman, is just one example of what happens when everybody's business is nobody's business. That happens when you have got consumer affairs matters being scattered throughout various government departments.

The Canadian Association of Consumers is very anxious that any department of consumer affairs should have included in it (a) the