

Government Organization Act, 1983

As a Member of our caucus committee on tourism, I have mixed emotions about the inclusion of tourism in the duties of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. We have been asking for sometime now for the creation of a separate and independent minister of tourism. I hope that the inclusion of responsibility for tourism and small business in the duties of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion will result in an increased onus on these two vital sectors. It will be wrong if it only applies to the Tier 3 and Tier 4 funding level constituencies. This will make for two classes of tourist and small business facilities. The goal should be a much higher level of equal support for all.

Bill C-152 will add four more parliamentary secretaries and expand eligibility to include Senators. As I look across at the Government benches I can see why this Government needs more parliamentary secretaries. It needs a plum to give to more backbenchers to keep them from crossing the floor. What I cannot understand is why Government thinks it needs Senators as parliamentary secretaries. Surely it is difficult enough now for the Opposition to force a Minister to answer a question. Is this an attempt to ensure that even the parliamentary secretary is not accessible? Or, is there some plan to move an MP to the Senate with the promise of the additional staff and salary of a parliamentary secretary?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to again congratulate the Minister, and his Department officials. I feel they have done a real good job. I believe he is one Minister who will deal with this Bill with fairness and justice. As a Member of the committee, I certainly wish him well.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I understand that by speaking I will wrap up the debate. We need unanimous consent.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I understood that we were awaiting word from another place, and that that is about to happen. I would like to participate in this debate very briefly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order. I would like to determine whether or not the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard) has indeed spoken in this debate.

Mr. Forrestall: Yes, he has.

Mr. Pinard: I moved the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): In that case, should the Chair recognize the President of the Privy Council that would end debate. I will recognize the Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall).

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be relatively brief. I understand the difficulty of the Government House Leader during the last two or three days. I understand his anxiety to remove himself, if not all of us, from this Chamber. As I understand, this will be the last matter before us, other than matters which might arise from the other place.

Before we do in fact depart from here for the summer, there are one or two points with respect to this Bill which I believe have to be made. They relate to the fact that in the beginning

it was recognized and has been succeedingly recognized by the Leaders of all Parties and all of our institutional groups, that in fact disparity is a major problem in our diverse, geographical and cultural community. In fact, Governments have a real responsibility to address these disparities with meaningful programs.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Victoria-Haliburton (Mr. Scott), has had this problem for 15 to 20 years in his part of Ontario which is suffering marginally. It has never been able to claim any of the benefits under any of these programs which flow directly from promises by Governments to rid this nation of disparity between the regions of our country. We have now an attempt to spread the program to all regions of the country, tiered as it is. Some regions will receive more, but the Government can still claim, as it has that in fact some regions will be entitled to greater levels of assistance than other regions. The fact remains, however, that all regions of this nation now in fact can turn to a singular program as opposed to four or five programs, and can in fact qualify and take advantage of that program.

That is not why I rise to intervene at this time. I do not intervene for that purpose at all. I intervene to remind a sick and lazy Government that it has abandoned its cause with respect to disparity in this country. I want to remind it forcefully that it has done that. If it thinks for one minute that this is a great measure, a great piece of legislation, let me say that in spite of the fact this Government has been consistently in office and in power since 1963 under a couple of Leaders, both of whom have vowed their allegiance to ridding this nation of disparity, this Government does not give a damn about disparity. This afternoon in this House it went to the porkbarrel. It reserved for Davey, for Dome Petroleum, for Jack Gallagher, and for whoever owns the shipyard, \$650 million worth of work—reserved without tender. Everyone else was cut off. Who over there is going to stand up and tell CN to put its ships and ferries into the Halifax shipyards? I suggest no one.

● (1840)

I want to make two or three observations with respect to disparity. It is the responsibility of all the Members of this Chamber to address themselves to the question of national disparity, disparity between the regions. It is not our responsibility to talk about it, but to do something about it. If this particular Bill—Good afternoon, Mr. Minister, nice to see you here. I would smile too if I got \$4.5 billion worth of work this afternoon.

I have some tables, Mr. Speaker, showing examples of the approximate increase. These are fairly accurate, but published tariffs never accurately reflect the cost of moving a given product. A tariff is one thing, but an individual arrangement between a producer and trucker is something else. Let me tell you what the Maritime Transportation Commission in the Atlantic Provinces says with respect to the movement by this