

that was established under Mr. Rawson, who was the former deputy minister of national health and welfare. In the last little while I have been involved in the program, I think it has been quite useful to have all ministers of different departments together to see what is happening in all those fields in which we are spending \$26 billion every year.

[*Translation*]

Because, Mr. Speaker, I know that all members of this House believe that it is very important to maintain in Canada the services and social benefits implemented during the last few generations. I think that we can all be proud of the progress accomplished in the field of social security and cultural policy and of the sophistication that we have reached in the last decades in the social and cultural fields. Our work is not over yet, but it is very healthy to review all programs within a given period.

In the past, as I saw myself when I was President of the Treasury Board, decisions have very often been made because of an immediate need to reduce government expenditures, and sometimes, this was done very arbitrarily. We hope that by establishing the Ministry of State for Social Development, all ministers who have a role to play in the social vocation accepted by the government or Parliament on behalf of all Canadians will now be able collectively to analyse our priorities and budgets, and to identify the programs which have lost their usefulness or which must now give way to higher priorities in the present context, and that the ministers will be able to do so collectively in full knowledge of what is happening. For my part, in the last few months, when I had the pleasure of presiding at the meetings of the Committee on Social Development, I saw that even though the ministry had not yet been officially established, it was already operating as it had done under the previous administration. I was able to see that the ministers involved can now know what are the priorities, what are in general the claims made on the government and what are the available resources.

We have been able collectively to appreciate the potential which exists within the administration, and to change our priorities and budget allocations so that the new priorities can take over from other programs which might be still useful in society, but which must now, in light of our experience over the last decades, give way to new priorities, because governments and Parliaments must always consider what constitute the priority for the population when they sit in the House.

[*English*]

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I should like first of all to congratulate the minister with respect to his additional responsibility. I think he has three responsibilities in concrete terms—federal-provincial relations, Minister of Justice and now Minister of State for Social Development. I was quite impressed with the comments of the minister respecting the fact that he hoped the ministry would be a small and highly competent one. So say we all. Also I should like to take

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the opportunity to wish him well with it, particularly in connection with the new bureaucracy he inherited. Mr. Rawson and his staff are highly competent and will do their best to keep the minister out of trouble.

It seems to me the hopes for the ministry in terms of integrating ministerial responsibilities and the workload of bureaucracies may well be realized. But this may be more than counterbalanced by the fact that, at least for an early period, it will rain confusion upon most people who are trying to attach responsibility as to who is responsible for what in the social policy field. I say that in spite of the minister's comments. If we read the order in council outlining the responsibilities, we see that the minister is not responsible for simply going around and getting the best and latest thoughts from the various ministers and delivering them somewhere. He is in fact charged with the responsibility of developing and leading. Indeed, the language used in the order in council encompasses responsibility for developing and leading in respect of policy initiatives in the whole field of social policy and social development.

● (1540)

I do not think one ought to see the intention of the government as simply one of better management of resources. In fact, I think it is otherwise. The intention of the language in this order in council is to create ultimately a fairly vast bureaucratic network dealing with social policy development. However, other members wish to raise that point in more detail, and my concern today is otherwise.

I would like to assume that the minister would like some helpful thoughts on how he might go about his new responsibility. One of the things that has always bothered me about any new bureaucratic arrangement is that somehow there is the assumption that life begins when you start. This is a common thought by most human beings, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker.

It seems to me that the social development field, if it is going to get anywhere, has to take some cognizance of the past. I recognize that one may say, "There go the Conservatives again talking about the past", but it has always seemed to me useful to see where we have been so that we might better find out where we ought to be going.

I am glad I spent a little extra time this morning feverishly trying to find out where we were in 1960. The minister talked about 20 years ago and gave a recitation, as is the Liberal party's wont, about all the wonderful things it has done on behalf of Canadians. For that I want to thank him. I think it is also worth while reminding people exactly where we were in 1960 so we might see where we want to be in the year 2000. I would like to spend a moment or two on that.

In 1960, oh blessed day, the Conservatives were in power. You may remember that Mr. Speaker. The prime minister, of course, was the Right Hon. John George Diefenbaker. The Conservative party had 50 seats in the province of Quebec. Major General Georges Vanier was Governor General, it was the Twenty-fourth Parliament and the outlook for the nation