

Government Organization Act, 1970

say that he also supported a private members' bill, submitted by the hon. member for Cochrane, providing for the appointment of Members of Parliament to boards and commissions. The government whip, and I am delighted to see in the House, in an effort to assist his colleague as all good whips do, posed the following question as recorded at page 4835:

Is he aware that according to press reports, of all the members on the government side of the Ontario legislature only eight fail to receive additional income above and beyond their \$12,000 emolument? This is in the last fiscal year.

That is not a defence of this bill, Mr. Chairman, but it seems to me that it was meant to point out that since there is supposed to be patronage in another jurisdiction it must be all right to have it here as well.

Mr. Francis: Could I ask the hon. member a question, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. McCutcheon: Just as soon as I finish my remarks. I ask hon. members opposite, do they approve of this in Ontario or any other place? Do they condone this practice? If they think it is wrong in Ontario, why do they support it here? Two wrongs don't make a right.

Look at what will happen to members of Parliament in the future. A move is under way to move members down to the Commonwealth building, and why? Plans are being made to have Parliament taken over by an elite. When a rubber stamp vote is required a bell will ring and members will climb on the bus which will run every three minutes. I think the Commonwealth building should be renamed Eunuch Hall.

To return to my point, Mr. Chairman, is this a bill to appoint five new ministers or six, or could it be 50 or 60? There is no reference in this clause to parliamentary secretaries or deputy ministers. Does clause 20 refer to deputy ministers or parliamentary secretaries? If it refers to deputy ministers, where do they come from and where do they go later? Are the ones who are let go those for whom we made a provision for extra pension payments in another clause of this bill? And where do we get the expertise—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard): Order, the hon. gentleman's time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to keep the floor very long but nevertheless, I have a few remarks to make concerning the legislation now before us, Bill C-207.

I also wish to say, like my hon. friend from Lambton-Kent (Mr. McCutcheon), that there is no need for me to apologize for taking up the House's time, for it is my duty to my constituents to speak in this debate.

I am quite convinced that Bill C-207, if it becomes law, will imply wasteful expenditures and for this reason, I think it is my duty to oppose it.

To me, this bill is like a grab bag of the kind you can buy in any drugstore. It looks good from the outside but you are disappointed when you open it, in the same way

[Mr. McCutcheon.]

as we are disappointed when we read clause 14 in particular.

The opposition is quite justified in doing everything in their power to block the passage of this piece of legislation.

I can easily understand the anxiety of government members who feel they meet the required qualifications to be entrusted with extra duties. But at any rate, let us not forget that Bill C-207 reflects the kind of arrogance and uncompromisingness so typical of this government's actions.

• (4:40 p.m.)

This is why I want to congratulate warmly my hon. friend from Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) who on several occasions has drawn the House's attention to the deficiencies of this legislation.

I was hoping that the government apprentice whip would have learned something but I think he is a desperate case and that the best he can do is to speak from time to time in an unintelligible fashion.

Mr. Chairman, with Bill C-207, the government is trying to get carte blanche to administer public affairs without consulting the House. If 264 members have been elected by the Canadian people it is to protect them against the extravagances of this government.

I cannot see why our friends opposite do not stand up in larger numbers to defend this legislation. Only a few of them stood up to congratulate the government or to have their presence noted or through loyalty toward their leader so that they be remembered when promotions are distributed.

After a quick study of the measure before us, one can but conclude that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) would like to increase the number of ministers from 29 to 34, and that of parliamentary secretaries from 16 to 34.

Considering the additional expenses those proposals imply, it is thousands and thousands of dollars that taxpayers will have to pay for such extravagance and the wish to reward the more or less deserving members of government.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that more thought should be given to that matter. It is becoming obvious through press reports as well as radio and television news that the people are beginning to resent that measure.

There could perhaps be another explanation to the proposal before us now. I think it is a roundabout way of rewarding Liberal members only since it is a known fact that during the last election many of them who were not sure of running were promised that the M.P.'s emoluments would be at least \$24,000.

In view of ever-increasing pressures, members of the cabinet probably concluded that the best thing to do was to introduce the bill before us now, so as to increase the number of parliamentary secretaries and ministers of state.

Some of my colleagues said self-assuredly, I believe, that almost 140 Liberal members would thus be rewarded