

Government Organization Act, 1970

I wonder how many members here tonight would like to be put in that position.

I have made this point because we want greater recognition of this most ancient of government departments. With that I rest my case and I hope the minister will see fit to change his position.

Mr. Otto: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the hon. member would permit a question having to do with the schizophrenia that he mentioned in his speech. I listened very carefully to his speech a few days ago and his objection to the bill was that there were too many ministers, too many parliamentary secretaries and too many departments being created. If I heard him correctly this evening, he now wants a minister of fisheries as distinct from a minister of the environment.

Mr. Crouse: That is not true. That is typical Grit distortion.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The Chair has recognized the hon. member for York East who wishes to ask the hon. member a question.

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, may I answer the hon. member's question? This was a point that I made in my speech, it is true, and I have to thank the hon. member for York East for reminding me of it. However, I think a fair reading of my speech would reveal that I was not complaining about the number of ministers so much as about the number of floating ministers, the four or five who will have no specific responsibilities. If the hon. member reads my speech on second reading I think he will find that I did say that. I said I thought it was a shame that with all the reorganization that was planned there could not be one minister specifically assigned to an ancient and honoured government department. I know I said that in my speech.

• (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Chairman, I am really relaxed because the Prime Minister is not in the House.

Mr. Paproski: No, he is not here tonight.

Mr. Lundrigan: Even though it is the Prime Minister's Bill C-207, he is not here and we can be assured that he will not make a contribution to air pollution in the House this evening.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lundrigan: I have lots of support from the rump and I am honoured because I am an unofficial member of that area. I have been invited to their next festival, and I indicate to the committee that I accept that invitation right now. As of today, Mr. Chairman, I understand we do not have to pay.

I want to go on record as strongly supporting the presentations of my three colleagues, two from Nova Scotia and the distinguished member for St. John's East, Newfoundland. Those hon. members presented a very logical argument in support of the amendment that the new department be entitled the department of fisheries

[Mr. McCleave.]

and the environment. This seems to be the appropriate nomenclature for the proposed department.

The establishment of this department is the result of a decision by the Prime Minister who is very much aware of pollution in Canada and is concerned about trying to establish a government department to take advantage of an issue which now exists in the United States. Let me direct a question to hon. members from western Canada who are interested in agriculture. I am looking at the government benches across the way and I see that we have here the Minister of Manpower and Immigration who is responsible for the Wheat Board. This minister has a special designation. He answers to Parliament for the Wheat Board.

An hon. Member: That's just a sideline.

Mr. Lundrigan: One of my colleagues indicates that this is just a sideline. Nevertheless, he is responsible for the Wheat Board. I see another hon. gentleman who is away down the list of importance, the hon. member for Medicine Hat who is called the Minister of Agriculture.

An hon. Member: Yahoo!

Mr. Lundrigan: And we have another minister who is called the minister of—I can't remember the name but he is the hon. member for Langelier. I must be careful of my pronunciation in view of the remarks today of the Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin. As a member from a small Newfoundland fishing community, I have to be very careful that I pronounce these names properly. In any event, he is an hon. member from somewhere in la belle province. This gentleman answers to the House in respect of regional economic expansion. When we talk about regional economic expansion we are talking about the great province of British Columbia, we are talking about the great oil sands of Alberta, we are talking about the great northern part of the prairie provinces which are rich in resources. This is an area which some members claim to be the great hinterland development of Canada.

We are also talking about the minister from Cornwall and the minister from Renfrew, where they unfortunately lost their great industry and now have some 200 people unemployed. In any event, he is the minister for that area. We are also talking about the minister who represents a great deal of Quebec where there are 200,000 unemployed at this moment. We are also talking about the minister from Prince Edward Island, the minister from New Brunswick, the minister from Nova Scotia and the minister from the cultural province of Newfoundland.

Mr. Chairman, the last three ministers I have mentioned could really be classified as ministers of rural affairs or rural development, or something to do with rural Canada. I have in mind the Minister of Agriculture, the minister of regional disparity and the minister in charge of unemployment and the disadvantaged areas of Canada. Surely this is what we are talking about. I wonder how the members from western Canada—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. With great respect, I should like to ask the hon. member whether he is thinking about the amendment which is before the committee.