

*Establishment of New Departments*

The Economic Council of Canada recommended, of course, that this combination be carried out and I am very glad that the government has seen fit to do so. If I may say so to the Prime Minister, I believe that both the minister and the deputy minister who have been selected for this department are admirable choices. I believe they are both equipped in terms of training and temperament to take on what will be a very difficult task which will involve blazing new trails and working out new programs. However, I want to say to the Prime Minister that if this manpower department, which our party has been recommending for years, is to be modelled on the Swedish labour market board and is really to have the kind of function which a manpower department should have in a technological society, it will require a great deal of support in terms of money and trained personnel. If the manpower program is to be more than a paper program there will have to be a very large sum of money spent on the training and retraining of workers as well as on the upgrading of their education.

I had some opportunity to see at first hand the work of the labour market board in Sweden. Of course, they have been at it for a long time, but they spend tremendous sums of money in training and retraining workers and as a result they are making full utilization of all their available manpower. This is something which we are not doing in Canada. The Economic Council of Canada has stated that we have now come within 97 per cent of our productive capacity. We are not using men and women in Canada who are often unskilled and unemployed and who will have to be retrained. Many of them will have to have their educational qualifications upgraded. There is no sense in giving the minister and his department, with all their enthusiasm, this heavy responsibility unless the government is also prepared to give them the very large sums of money necessary to carry out an effective program.

All I want to say about the responsibility given to the Solicitor General is that I believe it is a good thing to have the minister charged with the responsibility for penitentiaries. There has been a great deal of talk about penal reform in this House of Commons but very little has ever been done about it.

I believe that there should be a minister charged with the responsibility for looking into law reform, and the overhaul of the Criminal Code, and these other matters can

[Mr. Douglas.]

very well be given to the Solicitor General. However, whether the R.C.M.P. should be separated from the department charged with the responsibility for law enforcement is something about which I have some doubts. My colleague, the hon. member for Greenwood, will probably discuss this in more detail later.

I congratulate the government for combining the Indian affairs branch with northern development; I believe this is a natural affinity. I have complained for years that Indian affairs have usually been under the jurisdiction of civil servants who have never seen an Indian in broad daylight and have never seen an Eskimo except on television. I know that with the combination now being proposed the Indians will be served by people who are much more familiar with their problems and the solutions for these problems.

With reference to the proposed department of the registrar general which the Prime Minister suggested is to deal with business law and those things which affect the protection of the nation and individuals, I think this is a very helpful move. We in the New Democratic Party have been advocating for years the setting up of a department of consumer affairs. We are still hopeful that the government will see its way clear to set up such a department. We would like to see the department charged with the responsibility for administering combines investigation legislation and restrictive trade practices legislation greatly strengthened with some teeth in that legislation.

We would like to see provision for the standardization of weights and packaging, with legislation to prevent misleading advertising. We would like, as we have said on many occasions, to see such a department have a price review board with full authority to look into price increases to see whether or not they are fully justified by increases in costs. We are convinced that such an investigation would show in some cases that increases in prices are warranted but in other cases it would show that they are not warranted.

Action by any company or combination of companies to raise prices merely to take advantage of a situation would receive a good deal of public criticism and if the criticism became widespread enough, of course, the federal and provincial governments would find it necessary to pass concurrent legislation to deal with these price increases. My own opinion is that no such legislation would