

*Government Organization*

more co-ordination of policy than was needed some years ago.

Finally, there is a new factor in our lives, one which seems to have developed during the last couple of decades as a result of the tremendous influence of the mass media of information and propaganda. These are being used frighteningly by the huge corporations for the purpose of persuading us to buy what we do not need, to throw away what we really want, and to believe almost anything. In this situation there naturally emerges a broad social pressure for legislation and machinery to protect the consumer, as the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) pointed out during the earlier debate on this subject.

I wish to emphasize that in this field we are dealing not only with advertising and prices, the more pressing and the more obvious parts of consumer protection, but also with the quality of life in North America, to use a very general phrase. We are dealing with the fact, both in this country and in the country to the south, that the affluence and the habits we are developing are producing respect for the quantity of goods one possesses rather than for the quality of one's life.

All these things create a need for the protection of the consumer. Nor is it necessary to protect him only against falsehood. We need agencies which will help the consumer decide on the kind of choice that will enrich his living rather than merely place him somewhat higher in this status-seeking society.

The first reason for change then is the immense increase in government functions. Then there are the new problems arising from the scientific revolution, the necessary and inevitable new relationship between the federal government and the provinces and, lastly, the increasing need to protect the consumer. These, in summary, are why government reorganization is needed. These are the changes which government reorganization must meet. If the government's plans fail to do so, I submit they are not adequate.

On this basis my first point is to ask the right hon. gentleman why this reorganization does not do precisely what he suggested, at least by implication, it should have done, namely, bring into being two classes of minister, one belonging to the cabinet and having the general responsibility of government and the other a class of junior minister not belonging to the cabinet but having responsibility for the administration of a department.

There are many areas in which this could have been done. I say this smilingly, but if the right hon. gentleman had in mind to bring about a reorganization why could he not, for once, have done it in a non-Liberal way, that is to say, why could he not have done the whole job at one time instead of doing only part of it and expressing the hope that later the rest would be accomplished?

Surely it would have made a tremendous improvement in administration if his cabinet were smaller. Surely it would be easier for his ministers to meet much more frequently than is possible now? Surely it would be an advantage if some of his ministers were freed from departmental responsibility so that they could look at the situation in Canada and in the world as a whole without the burdens of departmental detail.

How much better the administration would be if we had a cabinet of that sort, if the ministers were able to leave details to others who could have the job of looking after a department or part of a department or a division, such as housing. I do not say this with acerbity but it seems to me the Prime Minister has not approached making the kind of reorganization which a modern society requires, though there is a great deal of good in the proposal he has placed before us.

The same is true of what the right hon. gentleman said about consumer affairs. If I remember rightly, he said that in addition to what is now contained in the various departments, including the Department of Agriculture, there might be other areas where more action is needed and that there might be need for co-ordination. Surely there is need now for co-ordination. Surely it is obvious there are other areas where there is a need for consumer protection other than that now being afforded by the Department of Agriculture. Surely there is no need for an investigation to see that the way in which the consumer now is exploited by advertising and advertising propaganda is a scandalous distortion of decent commercial behaviour. Surely there does not need to be an inquiry to see that the consumer must be protected against unnecessary rises in prices which are not warranted by any increase in actual cost. We do not need an investigation to establish that. However, if I may again say this smilingly, the right hon. gentleman could not help being a Liberal so he said, in order to make sure that he knows what everybody else knows, that he will ask the Economic Council to study the entire question of consumer affairs.