

*Productivity Council Minutes Requested*

by Mr. Jodoin, as I gathered, was that the council as presently constituted was an ineffective body and he saw no reason why the congress, whose representative he was, should continue to participate in a body which was relatively ineffective.

We have our own opinions as to the uselessness of the council. Perhaps a much smaller group would be more effective in attaining the goals which were set for this body. However, we are now getting into the field of the council itself. It was my thought that, having the various minutes of the productivity council produced for the public and parliament, it would be possible to make a far better assessment of the relative merits of the council and whether or not it should be maintained in its present form. I am sure the minister would like to have this matter cleared up in order that parliament, in looking ahead to the various problems confronting our economy, will be able to make an assessment on the basis of the thoughts and ideas described in the minutes themselves. I hope that we can proceed very quickly to the endorsement of the motion.

**Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, my reason for asking that this motion be transferred to the proceedings which take place in this hour today was in order that I could explain to the house why I believe, and the government believes, that it is not in the best interests of parliament or the people of Canada that the detailed minutes of a government sponsored body such as the productivity council should be made public. I am very pleased to learn, as a result of what the hon. member has said, that his main interest is to learn of the activities of the council since its inception. I am very pleased to have this opportunity today to outline what the council has been doing since it came into being.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish to outline to the house my reasons for believing it is not in the best interests of parliament or the people generally to make public the detailed minutes of any government sponsored body such as this. As the minister through which the national productivity council reports to parliament, I have been asked to provide the house with the minutes of the council. As the house knows, Mr. Speaker, the national productivity council consists of 25 persons, five of whom are chosen from the field of industry and commerce, five from the field of organized labour, five from the field of agriculture and other primary industries, five who represent the general public, four who are officers or employees of Her Majesty, and the executive director who is a permanent officer of the council.

The people who serve on the council are outstanding representatives in the fields from which they are drawn. They serve in a purely voluntary manner and receive no remuneration whatever for the useful and time consuming tasks which they undertake as a public service. To emphasize my point, I should like to name the members of the council, and I am sure that hon. members will agree with me that Canada is very fortunate to have people of this calibre who are devoting their time and efforts to the welfare of the country. One of Canada's prominent industrialists, Mr. George De Young, president of Atlas Steels Limited, has devoted outstanding service to the council as its chairman. Other representatives from the field of industry and commerce are Mr. N. R. Crump, president of Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Mr. George C. Metcalf, president of Loblaw Groceries Limited; Mr. W. Fraser Bruce, president of Aluminum Company of Canada Limited and Mr. J. Claude Hebert, president of Transparent Paper Products Limited. I am sure hon. members will agree that these are five of Canada's leading industrialists and businessmen.

At present the labour representatives on the council are Mr. Marcel Pepin of the confederation of national trade unions, Mr. Arthur R. Gibbons of the brotherhood of locomotive firemen and enginemen, Mr. Michael H. Nicols—

**Mr. Howard:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. What have the structure of the national productivity council and the background of its various members to do with the desirability or otherwise of producing the documents sought?

**Mr. Hees:** In speaking to that point of order, Mr. Speaker, the answer is simply that I am outlining to the house who are the members of this council because it is their words in their entirety, every single word that each of these men has said while the council has been in session, that the hon. member wishes to have produced verbatim; and I shall explain to the house that if we are going to ask or demand that every word, every syllable uttered by any man or woman who sits on one of these councils, who is summoned or invited to sit there by the government to help it determine policies that will be beneficial for the country in general is made available, then in the opinion of the government we will not be able to persuade people, particularly those of the calibre I am mentioning from the ranks of labour, management, agriculture and so on, to be willing to sit on these councils and give their time and energies, which are impossible to purchase with money, to the service of their country.