

ning the problem of the status of women. I am not in favour of those ministries to better supervise Crown corporations. What I tried to explain yesterday was this: from time to time, unexpected and serious problems crop up suddenly, which are of national portent and which do not fall within the jurisdiction of an existing department. Again I mention the problem of the situation of women in Canada which, so to speak, concerns most of the departments of the government and therefore no specific department.

It will therefore be understood that certain problems come under the jurisdiction of all departments in general, but of none in particular. And in order to formulate a sound and useful policy to solve those problems, it is necessary to establish a ministry of state which will be entrusted with the task of preparing a policy. That ministry will then administer and implement that policy. If any new ministry must implement a policy established and approved by Parliament, it might be that after achieving its purpose, it will disappear. Indeed, it is not the wish of the government to see a proliferation of bureaucrats and departments, and if a ministry of state has survived its usefulness, it will be suppressed. We have enough officials, we must not take on any more. One must distinguish between a real department and a ministry of state. In theory a department is created through legislation, and that is what we want to do. As regards the creation of a ministry of state that would be relatively small, that would look after policy-making, that would not have many functions, it may not be as necessary to follow the procedure applied for the establishment of a real department. One must distinguish between the two. Departments from now on will have to be established through legislation. On the other hand, a ministry of state may be established in order to achieve precise purposes and abolished once the purpose has been achieved.

That is what is meant by clauses 14 to 20. If the hon. member can distinguish between a ministry of state and a department and if he can understand that departments will be established as before, through legislation, I believe he could accept easily enough the creation of ministries of state through proclamation.

• (9:40 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Bell: I should like to ask the minister a question. I appreciate he is the first one who has tried to justify the roster system. In the first part of his response to my hon. friend from St. John's East he said that ministers who are not here are in the same position as members who are not here. Does he make no distinction between a minister who announces formally that he will not be present and a member who may be behind the curtain or in the building somewhere? Is there not a flouting of the Standing Order by a minister who announces publicly that without permission he intends to be absent? Does the hon. gentleman not see a definite distinction here?

Mr. Drury: I see a difference, but I cannot see that clandestine sneaking behind the curtain is any worse

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than stating one's intentions publicly. Doing in secret what is wrong is not really much better than doing publicly what is wrong.

Mr. MacInnis: Would the minister not also distinguish between the responsibility of a cabinet minister and that of any other member of the House and keep this in mind when he refers to the roster system? Would he also, since he has alibied the roster system quite well, explain to the House the practice of ministers not attending the House unless they are on the roster and are given permission to attend during the question period? I emphasize the words "given permission to attend" when they are not on the roster.

Mr. Drury: I appreciate the hon. member's emphasis on those words, though I am not sure why he emphasized them or who is in the process of granting this permission.

Mr. MacInnis: For the edification of the minister I would suggest he get in touch with the Prime Minister, if possible, and with the Minister of Fisheries. Let him look at what has happened in the past in this respect. No matter how the minister defines Standing Order 5, it is not a question of being absent voluntarily or absent on government business; it is a case of the roster system being imposed upon ministers who do not and cannot attend on the days on which their names do not appear on the roster.

Mr. McGrath: The minister seems to have missed the point with regard to Standing Order 5. I suppose this is one of our oldest rules, and surely its purpose is to preclude the possibility of anybody preventing a member of the House from attending. What the minister seems to ignore is that the Prime Minister is violating that rule by directing a number of his colleagues, on any one day, to stay out of the House, clearly in contravention of Standing Order 5.

Mr. MacInnis: He does not seem to know what the Prime Minister is doing.

Mr. Drury: You will forgive me, Mr. Chairman, but I am not sure whether this is really relevant to the bill. I apologize for being out of order. However, let me say that I am a member of the ministry.

An hon. Member: Explain.

Mr. Drury: I will try to explain what a member of the ministry is. I have never been directed by the Prime Minister to stay out of the House. Indeed, I have on occasions been in the House during question period on days other than those on which I am required to attend in accordance with the roster. I have come into the House on those occasions feeling that attendance in this House was appropriate and should have the highest priority on my time. Let me assure the hon. member that I did not have to seek the permission of the Prime Minister and I do not believe I shall have to seek the Prime Minister's permission to do so in future. This notion that members