

Government Organization

Mr. Trudeau: It seems that hon. gentlemen opposite do not want to hear the rest of the quotation.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Mr. Nowlan: This is the best part of the speech. It is the first emotion in the speech. And after all, it is 2,000 years old.

Mr. Trudeau: I am glad that I have been able to draw the attention of a few hon. members of the opposition. I should not be surprised if I have even evoked the attention of a few of our own members on this side. This gentleman, Mr. Petronium Arbiter, speaking just about 2,000 years ago, was indicating a frame of mind which we of course reject. We believe that to live is to change, and that to progress is to adapt and modify to such changes. This is the spirit which on our side inspired this bill. But hon. gentlemen on the opposite side of the house, or at least some of them, are welcome to use the quotation if they want to do so.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it might not be unfair of me to commence by saying that some of us might have expected the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to give us a few constructive insights into some of these problems.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We have learned that this never happens.

Mr. Stanfield: Let me say to the Prime Minister that as far as the note on which he ended is concerned, certainly life is full of change and certainly governments and people must be encouraged to change with the times, but one of our quarrels with the present government is that it talks a great deal about change but does very little indeed.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: As to the bill itself, I do not propose to comment in detail on very much of it. Apart from the new Department of Regional Economic Expansion, the bill obviously is part of what one must expect to be a continuing process in government, a continuing process of new organizations to some extent and the disbanding of old organizations as conditions change. It certainly does not appear to us from anything in the bill, or anything the Prime Minister said this afternoon, to represent any very revolutionary or

[Mr. Trudeau.]

far-reaching change in the approach to the administration of government in this country.

• (3:10 p.m.)

I am disappointed with one major point in the bill. I touched on it yesterday and will not refer to it at length today. But since the minister to whom I was speaking yesterday did not see fit to make any comment, perhaps I might evoke some kind of reaction from someone on the government benches. I am referring to the need for reforming and changing the status, the position and the legislation governing the Auditor General. I will simply content myself with referring the Prime Minister to the few very wise remarks I made on this subject yesterday and commending them to the attention of the members of the government. It is a matter of disappointment to me that neither the financial administration bill nor the government reorganization bill face up to the increasing importance of the Auditor General being made fully independent of the government and fully responsible to parliament. I doubt that any question involving public administration in this country is of such great importance today as the one I raised yesterday and which the minister did not consider important enough even to respond to.

There are some things that are a little difficult to understand and are perhaps not of fundamental importance so far as this bill is concerned. Some of us were surprised to see the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Forestry put together, and we certainly did not obtain any enlightenment from what the Prime Minister said this afternoon. It is a little difficult to see how these two departments mesh. It would seem, to some of us at least, that they should continue as separate departments because they are quite separate functions, even though on appropriate occasions they might both be presided over by the same minister. Certainly the Prime Minister, regardless of what a minister may say on the matter in the future, did not give the house any explanation with regard to this change.

I think the decision to place the Science Council of Canada on an independent basis will surely commend itself to the house generally.

Reference was made to the new Department of Supply and Services, the establishment of which was recommended by the Glassco commission. I expect this will command the support of the entire house.